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CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE ABOLITION OF WAR AND THE PROBLEM OF PROPERTY, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON ST. THOMAS, MARTIN LUTHER AND JOHN CALVIN

Gunther Jacobs

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CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE ABOLITION OF WAR AND THE PROBLEM OF PROPERTY, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON ST. THOMAS, MARTIN LUTHER AND JOHN CALVIN

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by
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The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and recommend to the School of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Christian Contributions Towards the Abolition of War and the Problem of Property, with Special Emphasis on St. Thomas, Martin Luther and John Calvin" submitted by Gunther Jacobs, B.A., in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis deals with two contemporary social problems. It tries to find possible solutions in the teachings and practices, past and present, of Christianity. The first problem is the abolition of war, which has become so urgent because of the destructive possibilities of modern warfare. The second problem deals with property and ownership, which stands in the foreground of many efforts towards economic reform.

The method used is threefold. The Scriptures are questioned for answers, history is studied for practical church endeavours and contemporary proposals are examined critically.

Biblical teaching has a realistic attitude regarding war, it is never good or just, but participation is unavoidable in this state of humanity. The Churches have been responsible for much bloodshed and at the same time have hindered and limited wars. They can teach their adherents today, to overcome the passions which favour war and strengthen those groups, which work for reforms of those institutions, which make the outbreak of war inevitable.

The same threefold methodical approach was used with regard to the problem of property. The Bible looks

with favour on common property without pressing this point. The temptation of property should be overcome, this was tried out by the first Christian congregation in Jerusalem. St. Thomas uses his philosophical system in favour of private property, which, though it is second best as an ideal, works better among men as they are now. The protestant reformers aided the rising esteem of private property considerably.

Today Christianity should encourage experiments trying to establish new property relationships. The goal will be a balanced system of collective property in basic industries and middle-sized private property for as many individuals as possible.

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CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE ABOLITION OF WAR

A. The Definition of War

Bismarck defined war as "diplomacy by other means," though it might be nearer to the truth to call it "the end of diplomacy." The Prussian general von Klausewitz gave this definition: "War is an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfill our will." This statement has such a wide range that it includes war between nations as well as civil war, undeclared warfare as well as legalized war. The essence of war is violence; this is the only realistic way to describe it. Its purpose is a psychological one, namely to break the enemy's will; all violence and destruction are only means to this end. Klausewitz considers war from the social point of view, "our opponent" not "my enemy"; this avoids numerous misunderstandings. Emil Brunner1) finds fault with this definition, he felt different words should be used, whether we want to describe a local incidence or a world-wide conflagration, the kind of war we envisage today.

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1) The Divine Imperative, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, p. 470.

B. Does Biblical Teaching Oppose All Wars?

1. The Old Testament

Luther in commenting on the Old Testament calls war one of the greatest plagues and includes the conquest of Canaan in this judgment. He draws our attention to the fact that the Israelites did not attack the new inhabitants of Palestine. They first made an offer of mediation towards a peaceful settlement. Luther has a general belief, that the losers in any war are always those who started the war. He gives as examples a number of war records[2]. The Old Testament knows nothing about the desirability of war, but calls it, in the words of Luther, "God's wrath over the wicked"[3]. The famous "Wars of the Lord" which David had to fight, he takes purely historically, thus taking it out of the hands of any modern propaganda machine. In the writings of the 7th and 8th century prophets we find an abhorrence of war. This has been interpreted as the beginnings of Biblical pacifism. Yet in this case the historical situation seems to be all-important. Palestine was a buffer state between the great powers of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, which were continually at war. The prophets felt that to be neutral and to trust in divine providence was preferable to becoming a tool of the great powers. However, their advice was seldom accepted and the period of the prophets was a time of useless bloodshed and national frustration, ending in the disastrous captivity of the

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[2] Numbers, chapter 14; 2. Kings, chapter 14; Judges, chapter 12.

[3] W. E. Vol. 3, p. 247.

nation. Besides their political common sense the prophets left us great visions of lasting peace. Isaiah pictures the time when swords will be melted into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks. These visions will not be realised by human action, but by a great deed of God. Thus these prophetic visions must be understood eschatologically and find their climax in St. Peter's sure hope of "A new Heaven and a new earth, where there dwelleth righteousness."

2. The New Testament

There is one passage in the sermon on the mount which is always quoted when any discussion arrives at the topic of war: St. Matthew, Chapter 5, verse 39. After having rejected the principle of Jewish national law, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," Jesus says: "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil." From the early Christian enthusiasts and to the Quakers and to Tolstoy, this commandment was interpreted as absolute non-resistance in case of a hostile attack. This non-resistance should preferably include the whole nation or at least the Christians within the nation.

Today it has often been claimed that Mahat~~h~~ma G~~h~~andi, a pagan, understood the intentions of Jesus better than did the Christians. His passive resistance campaign in India was hailed as an application of the sermon of the mount. It was completely overlooked that there is a deep difference between passive resistance and non-resistance.

Furthermore, Ghandi had to deal with the British administration, which generally took a rather humane view of his efforts,

as most officials had a Christian or at least a liberal outlook. His campaigns would have been dompletely ineffective against Bolshevism; he would have been liquidated after the first try to resist. However, the Christian pacifists should be allowed to practice their convictions in case of war. They should not be allowed to escape from the sufferings of war altogether, even if it would be possible. On the European continent it has been customary to use this type of conscientious objector in the medical corps. It is good to have these Christian pacifists in our midst, though their interpretation of St. Matthew, Chapter 5, verse 39, is scarcely correct. Until so far their number in comparison to the whole population of any western country has been small. Once they form the majority, resistance has become impossible. Wholesale persecution of these Christian pacifists would be useless, as they undoubtedly would prefer death to an immoral life. However, they are right, that war is a total negation of the Christian ideal of brotherhood, having its source in the sinfulness of the human heart. Yet because of this, it is impossible for the individual to escape participation in it altogether.

The Christian ideal of a worldwide brotherhood (not only of the proletariat) is revolutionary, but the Christian methods are not. They work slowly and for many people they take too much time. Jesus used the parable of the leaven gradually penetrating the dough and thus changing it. However, criticism of the slowness of Christian methods is most appropriate as the churches are generally rather sleepy. The Christian pacifists felt an effort should be made to abolish war through non-participa-

tion and national suffering. Yet it is a dangerous fallacy to expect anything from a national crucifixion. They argue that national non-resistance would melt the hearts of the most vicious attackers. If we allow them to carry away our children, to abuse our property and to employ the adult population for slavelabor, they will not triumphantly exploit us, but will repent and become our brothers. As this has never been tried in history (even the occupation of Denmark in World War II is no proof for it) the Christian pacifists are busy seducing us to try this method. Experiences of occupied countries during the last war prove that such an experiment is nothing else but national suicide. Luther says: "First fill the world with real Christians before you can behave in an evangelical manner; if you behave as if the world is Christian already, it is like putting sheep and wolves in one fold"4) (Gospel sermon 23rd Sunday after Trinity). St. Thomas and Calvin frequently express the same opinion. The deeper reason why no nation can overcome the enemy by love lies in the moral imperfection of its population. It is altogether out of place to compare the historical sacrifice of Christ, the truly innocent for the guilty, with any necessarily half-hearted national sacrifice.

In stressing the sermon on the mount the Christian objectors against war tried to overlook other New Testament passages dealing with the same subject. When John the Baptist was interviewed by soldiers in service as to what they should do to become members of the Kingdom of God, he did not advise

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4) Wismar Ed., Vol. 8, page 306.

them to leave the army. He told them only to be satisfied with their pay and to abstain from looting and terrorizing the civilian population. It is historically true that some Christian synods excommunicated soldiers. Yet this was not done because of an ungodly occupation, but because of the far reaching oath of allegiance which they had to swear. It was considered to be incompatible with loyalty towards Christ. The office of a soldier was never to be regarded as dishonorable in itself; Paul often used metaphors depicting the soldier's life and weapons. If the interpretation of nonresistance would be correct Jesus did not behave properly before Pilate, for he did not turn the other cheek, and Stephan did not, who very vehemently resisted his accusors, and Paul did not, who demanded his right as a Roman citizen before the governor Elymas. Thus the use of isolated scripture passages does not give us sufficient insight to draw authoritative conclusions.

Even the famous word "All that take a sword shall perish by the sword" is not conclusive. St. Thomas says "All that take the sword without having public authority to do so, shall perish." Therefore we must look for the underlying principles concerning war as we find them in the New Testament. If we seek diligently, we find two doctrines, which stand in tension to each other, namely the doctrines of the law and the gospel.

According to the moral law " what man sows, that he shall reap," Jesus must proclaim the punitive justice of God over Capernaum and a war of complete destruction over Jerusalem. The theologians used to call this his opus alienum. This prin-

ciple of punitive justice is still at work in our midst. It is at least a partial explanation of why war has not been abolished. The real task of Christ however, his opus proprium, is the proclamation of the gospel. The gospel is the love of God towards a hostile world. The Christian reflects this love in his life in a twofold way: Regarding war in the personal realm, love expressed itself as non-resistance. The term personal realm describes man in his lonely relationship with himself and with his God. In other words, this personal sphere is only a small sector of man's life. As a rule man has numerous associations and that includes at once obligations towards other human beings. Here love expresses itself as an activity, it seeks the welfare of its objects. St. Thomas points out that in doing so "one deed can have a double effect." A mother, protecting her child, might have to kill a vicious animal. A father, defending his household from a burglar, might be forced to do the latter bodily harm. In other words, we must always consider the end for which an agent is active. Luther said once "It is childish to see the slaying only in the soldier's office, we must see the end of his office, which is peace. In this regard we may compare a soldier with a surgeon operating; we do not consider the amputation of a finger as such, but the restoration of health"5).

In interpreting the sermon of the mount with regard to war, Calvin is a good disciple of Luther; in his polemics with the anabaptists, who were pacifists, he writes:

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5) In Kerr "Compound of Luther's Theology," Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1943, p.198.

> "Finally they conclude that all use of arms is a diabolical thing. Now it is true that the use of the sword ought not to be permitted by any private individual, to make resistance to evil; for the arms of Christians are prayer and meekness, to possess their lives in patience and to overcome evil by doing good, according to the doctrine of the gospel. The duty then of each of us is to suffer patiently if some outrage is done to us, not to use force and violence. But to condemn the public use of the sword, which God has ordained for our protection, is blasphemy against God himself. According to the spirit of God, uttered by St. Paul, the magistrate is a servant of God in our behalf, to repress and curb the violence of the wicked. The sword is placed in his hand to punish malefactors. Since God orders him to do this, who are we to hinder him?.... Furthermore, it is clear that it is the intention of these poor fanatics to condemn all munitions, fortresses, bearing of arms, and all such things which make for the defense of the country: and to prevent subjects from obeying their princes and superiors when they want these to be used in time of need .... But let us remember that it is to usurp the authority of God to condemn as bad what our Lord has permitted to us. He never forbade the use of arms to princes, to maintain their peace among those who molest them wrongfully: the Scripture does not say so"6).

We said before: "Love seeks the welfare of its objects," what has happened today is that we include wider objects into our love. We are not only concerned with our family, our business, our city, or our state; these objects are all fairly narrow ones. As soon as we include science, art, religion, and in our political goals humanity as a whole, the objects of our love become worldwide. The difficulty for the average man consists, that these objects in their worldwide aspect cannot be observed any longer, but must be imagined. Our imagination still seems to be unable to accomplish this. Or to put it into other words, we have a deeper feeling of guardianship, as Jesus had it in regard to his disciples, to "the little ones" (the children), and to the people of Israel with a special care for "the beloved city" Jerusalem.

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6) Opera VII, 77f.

Once we get a global feeling of guardianship, world wars become emotionally pretty difficult.

We mentioned already Calvin's interpretation of war. We may add that St. Thomas, in commenting on the sermon of the mount, does not consider it as a generally binding commandment, but as an evangelical counsel for the religious people, that means for a few only. Luther's attitude has often been misunderstood and only recently he has been bitterly assailed by Dean Inge as a forerunner of Bismarck and Hitler. He distinguishes between man for himself and man in office. "See, we talk not about the Christian in relation, not about the Christian in his lonely position before God, but bound in this life to another person, who is under him or next to him or above him, as for example Master or Mistress, wife, child, neighbour, etc., where one owes it to the other to protect and guard him wherever possible"[7]. Man does not act against God's will if he uses force and resists evil. He acts in his office which is a divine ordinance. All these ordinances have been established out of love and as an opportunity for loving. To realize their goal they must be at the same time ordinances of force. Luther asks the question "Shall a father never punish his child?" He answers "This would be a terrible cruelty, you could call it even murder, if a father always leaves his child unpunished, it is just as if he would strangle it with his hands"[8]. Once Luther talked in a

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[7] W.E. 32, 390.

[8] Sermon about Luke Ch. 6, verse 36 and following, delivered the 20.6.1535.

lighter mood about the right of war: "If the Turk attacks us, what he is not supposed to do, and yet we cannot stop him, should we send him theologians as ambassadors, who explain to him: "You may not fight, else we must condemn you?" and then must we allow him to destroy us and as a consolation we claim that we are really the victors?"[9] Luther distinguishes between the true Christian who is a citizen of the kingdom of God and those people who are only citizens of this world. The first is essentially good as a husband, who loves his wife, knows without reflection what good he can do for her. These Christians do not need the sword or laws. They are guided by the Holy Spirit and among them is no danger that the peace will be disturbed.

But among the children of the world it is different. They are still being guided by the devil. They are driven by the urge to kill, which Luther so often describes as the essence of natural man. They would devour each other, if God had not instituted among them government, sword and law, and the ordinances which look after these divine commands. Luther knows that no person is naturally pious. Thus government, sword, laws and ordinances receive their authority in this world. And even if here and there would be real Christians, they must suffer these ordinances because of the weaker brother. "The Christian shall not resist evil, but a Christian in office shall resist all evil"[10].

The ordinances of this world are not evil even if they originated through the fall of man, but everything depends upon

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[9] Rationis Latimianae confutatio, 1521.

[10] W.E. 32, 393.

the attitude which I have while acting in and through these ordinances. My attitude can make them good or bad. The fact that I act in office does not free me from moral responsibility. The reformers addressed themselves frequehtly to the rulers and magistrates to admonish them in Christian conduct, yet Luther was very pessimistic about the kings of his time, "A good king is a strange bird in heaven."

Willingly man should fulfill his duties which the ordinances of this world demand of him. In doing so, he should not think of himself, his profit and his honor, but should exclusively be concerned with his fellowman. As soon as it affects myself and my cause, I must be willing to bring any sacrifice. "Thus both things go nicely together, that you satisfy the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the world, that you suffer evil and at the same time that you punish evil, that you resist evil and at the same time do not resist it. For at one time you consider yourself and your cause, at the other time you consider your fellowman and his affairs. As far as it concerns you, you follow the gospel and you suffer injustice like a real Christian; as far as your fellowman is concerned you follow the principle of love and you do not tolerate injustice for him"11).

All the three great theologians, St. Thomas, Luther, Calvin, have an abhorrence towards war, yet following the teaching of the New Testament they know that war, never being desirable, still is always probable, because of the deep spiritual

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11) W.E. 11, 255.

disunity of mankind. As much as a Christian will loath it, he will not be able to escape from it. War is a constant challenge asking for a solution.

C. Christian Ethical Thinking Dealing with War.

The Christian attitude towards war has been largely molded by St. Augustine. In his fundamental book "De civitate Dei"[12] he enumerates the following 5 points:

1. God appointed to wage wars in the past. This statement, though historically correct, is not very helpful for the present problems, because it would be a dangerous fallacy to take events of the past and simply project them into the future.

2. The attacker must be compared with a murderer and should be treated accordingly. This second principle led to much hypocrisy, nobody had the courage any longer to be an honest attacker, but clothed his villainy in the garb of innocent self-defense.

3. Non-resistance is inconsistent with public policy. St. Thomas comments on this point: "Resist not evil does not require from us, to do mischief by allowing wickedness to go unpunished."

4. St. Augustine explains the turning of the cheek as an inward disposition of goodwill towards the aggressor. To illustrate this, if the aggressor in battle would be wounded and becomes helpless, we will not go in for the kill, but become like the good samaritan.

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[12] 7, 454 D.

5. St. Augustine says: "War is a means to the end of peace;" and peace: "Is the tranquility of order" (St. Thomas).

From St. Augustine we get the classification of wars into two groups: The just and the unjust wars. The just war equals the defensive war and the unjust war equals the attacking war. This classification is really an alien thought in St. Augustine's doctrine of universal human depravity; don't we all fall short of the glory we should have before God? (Romans III, 21.)

St. Thomas elaborates the principle of the just war. He puts down three conditions:13)

1. There must be a definite legal authority to declare war. This might have been common sense in his time, especially to avoid the nuisance of private wars, but today wars are either never declared or the declaration follows a few days after hostilities have begun.

2. The war must have a just cause, "that is, that those who are attacked for some offense merit such treatment." This is a very vague statement and has some similarity to a blank cheque.

3. The belligerent must have right intentions, "either of achieving some good objects or of avoiding some evil." This sounds like common sense, yet John K. Ryan, a modern disciple of St. Thomas, criticizes the philosopher on this point. He says: "Right intentions are a subjective element determined by conscience, they must be weighed by objective standards of justice and charity.14)"

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13) Summa Theologia 22, Question 40.

14) John K. Ryan, Modern War and Basic Ethics, Milwaukee, Bruce Ed., page 54.

As decisions about war have to be made today in a very short period of time, how can the people make up their minds whether the cause is just and the intentions of their government right? How can the people get to all the facts involved in modern politics? Ryan points to the shocking discoveries which every nation makes once a war is ended. There yawns a deep gulf between wartime beliefs, which drove many to bring the highest sacrifices, and the post-war knowledge of shabby politics. It might take fifty years and longer to make any valid decisions about the justice of a cause and the right intentions of governments.

The Finnish Russian war (1939-40) is only too good an example. After the negotiations in Moscow had failed, it seemed that justice and right intentions were completely on the Finnish side. The Finnish cause had a tremendous emotional appeal, not only in Finland and the neighbouring Scandinavian countries, but all over the Western World. Here at least was a clear case, where on the one side everything was white, and on the other side everything was black. However, ten years later, at the time of general hysteria with regard to Russia, we must acknowledge that the Kremlin had a relatively just cause for war. It might even have quoted Luther: "If war threatens, you must not wait until the enemy invades your country, but you should meet him when he is still far away, or even in his own territory."[15]

The brave Finnish soldiers who fought desperately during the spring offensive, died for a government which was a secret ally

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[15] Vol. 4, p.725, Philadelphia Ed.

of Hitler's foreign policy to find living space for an overcrowded Germany (Drang nach dem Osten). Left by the West, left by Germany, forsaken by their Scandinavian brothers, death must have been hard for these heroic men; let us hope they perished in the belief that theirs was a just war. The two protestant reformers did not contribute anything that is essentially new in the classification of wars. Luther classifies them into:

1. Wars of desire, whose author is the devil.

2. Wars of self-protection, which do not have God as their author, as some pious people might imagine, but which he calls a human misfortune.

Calvin was too much of a realist to be captivated by the glamour of war, and he recognized clearly its evils. He comments upon "that fierceness which is often found in the military profession, and which is utterly unbecoming to the servants of Christ"16).

Urging the elect to greater fidelity in the midst of persecution and forced migration, he exhorts them to show more courage than mercenaries who undergo all manner of hardship in war to serve the devil. He recognized and deplored the unchristian character of war's accompaniments, "the cruelties, thefts, reprisals, acts of violence, extortions, and other such unholy deeds which are committed in it." In a measure, he realized its ineffectiveness for he remarks that "we are not at all surprised when a war is finished, if it begins over again right away"17).

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16) Opera lii, p.283, Comm on I Tim vs 3.

17) Opera xxviii, 445 Ser. on Deut 28:46-50.

The classification of wars into just and unjust has led Christian ethical thinking astray. In all human affairs there is only a relative justice, and "we do not live by our deeds, but through the forgiveness of them." (Karl Barth, Credo). A far better division might have been the statement that war is always a choice between two evils. The question would be: "Is war the lesser evil?" "Or peace the greater one?" Before the war of liberation (1813) the people in Germany encouraged each other with the slogan:

"Better an end with losses (meaning human life)
than loss without end." (meaning loss of liberty)

It is true that when war is presented as a choice between two evils, there is still the risk of a faulty judgment. But the whole atmosphere is much clearer, the danger of hypocrisy is lessened, everybody knows, that we are in for terrible times, "Blood, toil sweat and tears."

Because of the terrific consequences that will accompany an erroneous judgment, suggestions have been made that no war should be declared or no aggression resisted without having first conducted a popular referendum. This was taken quite seriously in the twentieth, but in the time of the "Blitzkrieg" this sounds ridiculous. We depend completely on the social consciousness of our public leaders, who often within an hour or so have to make far reaching global decisions. More than ever, general elections have become of the utmost importance, and the elector must withstand the temptation to prefer as his choice "the jolly good fellow" before "the conscientious statesman." This is par-

ticularly true in the United States, which has twice within thirty years won the war and lost the peace. Lofty ideals, worth fighting and dying for, have been put before the people, and the results have been disappointing. Naturally this let-down is nothing new in the history of nations, particularly after a war. Luther tried to solve this conflict in his famous pamphlet "Whether soldiers too can be saved"18).

"If you are uncertain about the war think the best of your Lord's intentions, but if your lord is wrong in going to war, refuse to go." In times where a wrong decision of our statesmen can lead to a national disaster, the question of participation in war must remain a matter of conscience. This critical attitude of the population will be one of the most efficient brakes to stop rash decisions, but might at the same time be a real monkeywrench thrown into the machinery of total warfare. A. M. Rehwinkel in "The Christian and Government"19) writes:

> "Participation in war is a matter of conscience. We admit this in the 16th article of the Augsburg Confession. But wars have become more sweeping in implications and consequences since the adoption of that article. If it was a matter of conscience then, it most certainly must be now. But today governments conscript all citizens, Christians and non-Christians, able to do war service and no one can escape from the support of war with his taxes. Once war is declared by those in power, Christian and non-Christian alike are compelled to kill, destroy helpless women and children, wield the most horrible weapons of destruction ever devised by man for the annihilation of entire cities, and he has no chance to inquire whether the cause for which he must destroy the lives and habitations of fellow human beings is a just and righteous cause. To kill a man or a woman and a child without a just cause is murder, and no glamour of war can

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18) Philadelphia Ed., Vol. V, p.16.

19) Concordia Theological Monthly, July '50, pp. 504-505.

> change that. To take or destroy the property of another is a violation of the seventh commandment, and that is still a commandment in God's holy Decalog, and no government can abrogate God's own laws. With the coming of atomic and hydrogen bombs the question of war has become a most serious matter for the consciences of the individual Christian and of the Christian churches."

The freedom of conscience to decide whether to partake in war or refuse to do so, is the main contribution of Christian ethical thinking.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

D. What Did the Nominally Christian Middle Ages Accomplish With Regard to War?

A mere contribution of thought regarding war is not enough for the church. At a time when everybody called himself a Christian, at least nominally, and when the power of the state could be used for Christian goals, we should expect the theoretical contribution to have been realized in life. However, a great disappointment awaits us. Christianity was one of the main causes for war.

We can observe this in the crusades, in the fight for supremacy between Popes and Emperors, and in the so-called religious wars. Let us consider the first mistake, the crusades. It is true, the Muslims were the attackers, and the Christians had to defend their way of life; it is true, that the Muslims were intolerant, making pilgrimages to the Holy Places first difficult and later impossible. Still, this was no excuse for the Christians to allow an outbreak of emotional religion, with all the ugliness that follows when the mob-mind raises its sinister head, to let thousands of children march unprepared and thus to perish in the snow of the Balkan mountains.

All the crusades failed, though the best theologians stood behind them as, for example, Bernard of Clairveaux. The results of these unfortunate attempts were thoroughly bad. The spirit of gain and adventure, until then checked by the church, got free hand and has never been controlled again.

Early capitalism is an unwanted child of

the crusades, though true Marxists might see it the other way around. The military orders were created to provide the man-power for these shortlived conquests. With the cessation of the crusades new fields of activity had to be found for them. The Teutonic knights were transplanted into eastern Europe, and it can be said, that Prussia was born in Jerusalem.

Already at Luther's time the evil effects were clearly seen. As a new wave of Turkish aggression rolled as far as Vienna, Luther wrote his pamphlet "On war against the Turk"1). The main points are:

1. This is a war between the Emperor and the Turkish Sultan.
2. The church should not mix itself in this war by calling for a crusade.
3. Instead, the church should realize that the aggressive Turk is the devil's servant and God's rod to punish its severe failings.
4. To beat the Turks' god, namely the devil, there must first be a sincere repentance.
5. Luther goes so far as to warn against resistance, if there has been no general profound change. This sound attitude was misunderstood by his theological adversaries, who suggested that he was in secret agreement with the enemy and tried to undermine the national fighting spirit. These suggestions were more than once hurled against Christian churches during the last war, as they insisted that victory without preceding and visible repentance was meaningless.

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1) Philadelphia Edition, Vol. V, p. 81 and following.

There is always danger that somebody would change a war into a crusade or proclaim it as a holy affair. But holiness means "to be without spot or wrinkles," which cannot be said about any human affair. Even Hitler withstood the temptation to call his attack against Russia a crusade but somehow this concept has a strangely suggestive power and it is still with us.

One of the latest warnings comes from Reverend Martin Niemoller, who said:[2)]

> "I am directing myself exclusively against the frequently heard statement that a war against Bolshevism is necessary in order to save Christianity and the Christian Church. It is un-Christian, however, to carry on war for the purpose of preserving the Christian Church, for the Church is not in need of being saved. She has no fear of Bolshevism because she has the promise that even the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. She is rather to serve, with her message, the Communists as well as all men, while she rejects Communism as a doctrine of salvation as well as all other doctrines of salvation. Communism, however, must and may be opposed only with spiritual weapons and lifted out of its joints. All application of power will prove in vain. The great sorrow of the West results from the fact that until now it has not been in a position to oppose Bolshevism with a spiritual power and a spiritual dynamic. The Church of our day, which so emphatically stresses peace, does so on account of human beings who again are in danger of being sacrificed for allegedly "higher purposes" and hurled into misery. According to Christian teaching, a so-called "higher purpose" does not exist because Jesus Christ died and rose again not for indiscriminate higher purposes, but for men. And, indeed, for all men: good and bad, just and unjust, capitalists and Communists, democrats and National Socialists."

Another source for constant fighting was a continual conflict between Popes and Emperors. Today the Pope has tried to become an arbiter of peace, to be present at the international conference table. However, the mediaeval record of the Papacy

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[2)] Concordia Theological Monthly, October 1950, p. 780.

with regard to war is so poor, that the Popes seem to be forever disqualified for this high office. We should have no romantic feelings about the "universal culture," this shortlived synthesis, which was destroyed in the fights for supremacy between secular and spiritual power.

However, the greatest blunders of Christianity were the religious wars which devastated Germany and France. There it was tried to decide the question (What is truth?) by military power. Though Frederic the Great lived nearly two centuries later, the clergy seemed to believe in his sarcastic saying: "God is always on the side of the stronger battalions."

Behind these religious struggles stood the theology of intolerance. St. Thomas compared an heretic with a forger, thus putting him in the ranks of criminals, deserving a severe punishment. The evil deed of a forger cheated people out of some money, a purely earthly affair, but the heretic robbed people of their eternal salvation.

Calvin thought along the same lines, only he called the heretic a blasphemer, thus opening the way for the death penalty according to Old Testament Law. It is true, that neither the Roman nor the Reformed church killed heretics, this job was always delegated to the worldly powers. This is a very nice judicial distinction, which could scarcely appeal very much to the burning "unbeliever."

The young Luther tried to accomplish everything by "the WORD only", but his royal followers soon found this procedure too cumbersome. Therefore at the end of his life Luther was put

under pressure and followed the traditional teaching of the Middle Ages, that the State has the task to protect and to expand "the true religion."

After incredible bloodshed, while cruelties were permitted which were never heard before, the intellectual world got tired and disgusted with this spectacle and gave up the search for right doctrine altogether. Thus these religious wars invited the age of tolerance, meaning in most cases the age of indifference. There seemed to be little connection between 16th and 17th century Christianity and the Christ as He is portrayed in the Gospels.

E. Christianity has been Successful in Trying to Humanize Warfare.

The preceding paragraphs throw a rather dark light upon Christianity and the problem of war. Yet Christianity has been able to overcome the "Vae Victis" of the Romans and has for some time successfully humanized warfare.

The churchmen of the early Middle Ages had to face the teutonic Barbarians, who enjoyed the excitement of war, the rich spoil, considering warfare as a normal occupation of a male human being. The bishops could not altogether extinguish the fighting spirit, but they accomplished one difficult goal: that war had to be fought under rules. Under certain circumstances, mainly following the idea of St. Augustine, war was a completely legal affair. The Pax Dei Synod of Elene 1027 did not only accept a number of resolutions, but enforced them too. Among the prohibitions we find: No fighting in winter, no fighting

during Holy days (and there were innumerable Church festivals during the Middle Ages), no fighting in Jubilee years, places of refuge to be respected by all belligerents and, last but not least, the arbitration of the Church.

Gellert[3] finds this Church system quite effective, and quotes numerous occasions where frictions, which might have led to war, were successfully settled by the Church authorities.

The Russian philosopher Berdaiev claims that we are on the threshold of a new Middle Age, meaning an universal culture under the leadership of Christianity. He is hopeful, too, that this would lead to the abolition of war. Unfortunately, the new barbarians of today are not only outside of the Church, as in the time of St. Augustine, but they are right within her. Under the battlecry of "Internal evangelism" the Church has tried to convert them, but so far in vain. There seems to be little hope that the new barbarians will stand reverently before the bishop, who meets them outside of the city, imploring them to show mercy, to regain self control, and to become a member of the large Christian family. The Christian Church of the twentieth century has as many courageous men and therefore martyrs as the early Church; however the seed of the seven thousand slain priests in Russia has not germinated yet; whether it ever will, we do not know.

The many years of confinement in a concentration camp in Dachau of the Reverend Martin Niemoller or his marvelous deliverance by American troops, did not bring the new barbarians

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[3] H. Gellert: History of Political Thought. New York, Harper Bros., 1924, p. 142-143.

in Germany back to their Church. Dr. Niemoller became a hero in a Hollywood movie, but the real purpose of his life is still unaccomplished.

Leaving the Middle Ages we come to the great reformed theologian Hugo Grotius, who was not alone in his work to limit war, but was supported by practically all Christian Churches. Gradually the limitations he set up were accepted by most civilized countries and laid down by international law. A distinction was made between the non-combatant population and the army. War was considered to be a fight between soldiers, and the population should be spared from as much suffering as possible. Private property was "Sacrosanct." Looting was out of the question, if any property had to be used by the invading army, it had to be paid for. Even public property could not be destroyed, unless it had a definite military value.

A further distinction was made between the fighting soldier and the wounded or captured soldier. It was felt that the right to injure the enemy is not unlimited, the soldier must have a chance to escape death; weapons that destroy everybody, weapons which cannot be resisted, were outlawed. A good example of the latter case is the use of poison gas, and the atom bomb falls into the same category.

This legal system of limiting war and thus humanizing it, was undermined by many breaches during World War I; it broke down in World War II.

Virgil Gheorghiu expresses this in his book "The Twenty-Fifth Hour": "In contemporary Society human sacrifice is no longer considered worth mentioning - it is commonplace. Human

life is valuable only as a source of energy; the criterion is exclusively scientific. That is the terrible law of our technological barbarism. It will reign supreme after the total victory of the mechanical slaves. Man will be fettered by technocracy for a very long time to come - but he will not die in chains. Technological civilization can create comforts, but it cannot create the spirit."

A few examples, chosen at random, of how the Churches tried to limit warfare in the second world war, might prove that they tried to face the issue squarely.

The Church of England protested to the Allied High Command against the saturation bombings of German cities. The Church did this at a time when the ruins of British cities were still smouldering from recent attacks. The Church, within its own ranks, overcame the natural urge for revenge, pointing out the barbarism of these saturation raids and their consequences for the victor once the war was won. The history of the last five years has justified the verdict of the Church, the victors have to rebuild the cities they destroyed and to feed the population, who have been robbed of their means of production.

The arguments of the Church of England were a mixture of Christianity and utilitarianism and did not change the decision of the high command. The clergy might have accomplished their purpose, if they had remembered and published their parish experience, that bombing raids in most cases strengthened the determination of the population to fight on instead of breaking their morale.

Both morally and strategically they followed the right track, because the efficacy of air bombing is largely debatable. "It is a fact that, in spite of all our bombing of Germany, Hitler's war production kept increasing up to the summer of 1944, and multiplied nearly three times between the winter of 1941-42 and D-day, 1944. By the end of 1944 total German production was reduced by only some 20%, although their cities lay in ruins."4)

The American-Lutheran-Conference stood behind the child-feeding program of ex-president Herbert Hoover. This program was rejected by the British High Command and many Lutheran ministers were henceforth considered to be disloyal, because they backed a humanitarian project which might have saved the health of thousands of children.

The Confederation of Dutch Churches made an effort to protect the Jews in Holland, who were not too popular among the Dutch population. Though their efforts could not stop the cold-blooded mass murder of a national minority, they endangered their own lives and became one of the centers of resistance.

The confessing Church in Germany succeeded in the winter of 1944-45 in delaying the gassing of so-called "useless persons" (invalids, incurables, insane and old people) who were later liberated by the western armies. At the end of hostilities the same Church proposed a confession of a common war-guilt, which was not accepted by the churches in the victorious countries. It seems today that a great opportunity for humiliation was missed and, instead of understanding and mutual forgiveness, the spirit of national arrogance and deceit did flourish again.

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4) Nicholas Ignatieff: The Russians. Maclean's, Feb. 15, 1951.

F. The Characteristics of Modern War.

Before we can consider the endeavors of Christianity to abolish modern war, we must point out its specific characteristics.

1. The Prussian general, von Klausewitz, observed the great break in the science of warfare. After the defeat of Napoleon the mass armies, which had to be drafted to achieve this goal, were not released, but remained. The small mercenary force had become an institution of the past. Whenever the three great theologians - St. Thomas, Luther and Calvin - discuss war, they have this institution before their eyes. As it does not exist any longer, it is rather dangerous to return to their ideas and to repeat them uncritically.

2. The use of explosives and the mechanization of the troops means total war. This phrase "total war" has a different meaning whether it is used by a Western or a totalitarian strategist. In the West it means a total effort of the whole population of all the means of production, a total mobilization. For a totalitarian strategist it means all this and the unlimited use of the war machinery; moral limitations are definitely antiquated when he conducts a war.

3. Every military conflict today has a tendency to become world wide. Emil Brunner in his "The Divine Imperative"5) describes the global war of today as follows:

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5) Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster Press, p. 470.

"Owing to the substitution of a national army for a mercenary army, to the introduction of mechanical and chemical methods of warfare, and to the close-knit character of all the economic spheres throughout the world, war has now become a method which cannot any longer be reckoned as an item in any political reckoning of gain or loss. The idea of "winning a war" still plays its old disastrous part in the popular mind, but it no longer has any place in reality. In modern warfare all are conquered and none are victors; in modern warfare there is no longer any "non-combatant population." If war were to break out at the present time, it is extremely uncertain whether the idea of "fighting in defense of one's country" would have any meaning at all. It is quite possible that in the "next war" the soldiers in the lower ranks would enjoy the largest measure of protection, compared with the rest of the population. Some decades ago war may have been an instrument which, although it was brutal, could be used to resolve intolerable international tension; but today, owing to the fact that it cannot be controlled, it has lost even this shred of utility. It seems highly probable that the next war would consume the whole of the material and vital energies of the nations of Europe, or of the civilized world, to such an extent that it would be no exaggeration to describe it as a process of "bleeding to death." In view of this fundamental change in what war means, it is unpardonably superficial to try to justify war by means of pictures of the wars of the past with all their glamour and romance. The Christian in particular has no right to live in the past. He in particular ought to know that modern warfare means such a complicated mechanism for the destruction of material, vital, physical and spiritual goods, such an exhausting process of bloodletting, in which the most valuable blood of all the nations is wasted, such a technical business, which has become entirely divorced from all the ancient "manly virtues", and an international disaster of such vast proportions whose effects cannot be calculated, of equal horror for the victors and for the vanquished and, through the fact that it involves the defenseless civil population - women and children - is such a radically unchivalrous method of international strife, that all that used to be said in its favor, with some amount of justification, has today lost all validity. The development of the technique of warfare, the heightening of war's intensity, and its enormous extension has led to a point where war becomes race suicide. War has outlived itself. It has become so colossal that it can no longer exercise any sensible function. To expect to establish any just order by means of a conflagration - called war - has become a political madness...... "

Unfortunately Brunner has become a prisoner of his own terminology, that war always means "a world-wide conflagration," that his view for facts has been darkened. There have been victors in the war of independence between Indonesia and the Netherlands, and between Palestine and the Arab League. Brunner's whole description holds true only for the war between the great powers.

4. Another characteristic of twentieth century war is its permament condition. The main cause for this phenomenon can be found in the "science" of communism. Its philosophy centers around three laws, the first one is known as the law of the dialectic, which is not important for our purposes. The second is called the law of negation, which is very important for the permanence of war. Engels and Marx pointed out that a living body, which acquires new cells, must have some of the old ones die. The most familiar analogy they used is that of a grain of barley. When this is put into the ground, the grain dies and ceases to exist. In its place there grows a plant. Eventually the stalk dies too. In its place we get a handful of new seed. This principle is applied by Marxism to all of life. It is used to explain the quantitative increase of reality without appealing to some cause outside of the matter itself. Progress in the social order works in the same way. New life is born of death and destruction.

The third is the law of transformation. This is a corollary of the law of negation. It is based on the observation that the quantitative development of a reality often results in the production of an entirely new form.

Let us take water for an example. At thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit it suddenly becomes ice, a new kind of substance. In the same way at a given point, namely at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, and by a leap, water turns to steam. The classic example usually cited to demonstrate this matter of the leap is the following: One atom of carbon and four of hydrogen make methane; if one atom of carbon and two of hydrogen are added, we get an entirely new substance, ethane; add another atom of carbon and two of hydrogen and the leap will produce propane; add once more and lentane results; add again, and pentane is produced.

Their concept of the leap in matter is of great significance in an understanding of communism. From it is derived its whole theory of revolution, of leaps in social order. Revolution is justified by communists on their principle that the laws of nature not only allow it but demand it. In spite of these laws communism became successful abroad only after it joined with the ideology of Russian Imperialism, using the Red Army as a spearhead for its "revolution."

The term "permanent revolution" had a two-fold meaning in Marxist phraseology. It meant:

1. to join the liberal revolution of 1848, whose goal was very different from the communist, hoping to use the turmoil which generally accompanies upheavals for communistic purposes.

2. to arrange for revolutions until the globe was under communistic influence. This opinion was represented by G. Trotsky, who was exiled and later murdered in Mexico, yet it is doubtful whether his views died with him.

The relationship between permanent revolution and permanent war is obvious; the communistic revolutionary forces within every country serve two purposes: they lead to interference from the communistic countries and are a powerful weapon in themselves ("the fifth column").

Some circles in the U.S.A. try to use the idea of the permanent revolution for their own purposes. They call the American rebellion "a permanent revolution in the affairs of men;" they quote R. W. Emerson, "the office of America is to liberate," giving to all people inalienable rights, which reflect the laws of nature, namely life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Fascism and Nazism tried to counteract the communistic movement by becoming more warlike. They nearly verbally copied its philosophy, that war is a permanent condition, yet added a distinctly religious flavor. "Il Duce" or "Der Fuhrer" are men out of this world, surely sent by divine providence, with a mission similar to St. George, namely to conquer the wicked red dragon. This conquest usually gets the name of a Holy Crusade and is supposed to give meaning to the "hum-drum" existence of most individuals.

With this thought Conrad Heyden concludes his well-known work "Der Fuhrer":

> "Hitler was able to enslave his own people because he seemed to give them something that even the traditional religions could no longer provide: the believe in a meaning to existence beyond the narrowest self-interest. The problem today is to give that larger significance and dignity to a life that has been dwarfed by the world of material things. Until that problem is solved, the annihilation of Nazism will be no more than the removal of one symptom of the world's unrest."

Nazism and Fascism were only a bad copy of the original, namely communism, being saturated with the same spirit in order to defeat it. The Western world has accepted war as a permanent threat for some time to come - "There will be high defense expenditures for at least another generation" (Canadian Minister of Defense Claxton). But the same glamour of war which marred the first countermovements against communism has appeared in our midst. A. M. Rehwinkel in his essay[6] makes this comment about contemporary America:

> "In America today everything tends to glorify war. Every soldier is a Hero. Most of our public monuments commemorate men or events of war; our school textbooks make every war in which we have participated a war for freedom or a holy and a religious war. War is symbolized by song, picture and symbolism. Even the toys we give our children at Christmas, the birthday of the Prince of Peace, aim to popularize war."

The attitude of Americanism is sometimes the same as that of Russian expansionism.[7] We may expect a "head-on collision" between these powers.

5. Christian leaders have viewed this situation with great alarm and judged it accordingly. Emil Brunner called war a great folly, Pope Pius the Eleventh has described its effect upon the populations as "monstrously murderous and almost certainly suicidal." Pope Pius the Twelfth has gone one step further, and has set a fascinating goal for the catholic faithful, namely the conversion of Russia. The Roman Catholic church is uniquely fitted for this task, having millions of believers behind the iron curtain. However, it has been connected for so long with reactionary economic policies in these countries, being

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[6] "The Christian and Government." Opus Eited, p.498.

[7] Compare U.S.A. The permanent Revolution. Fortune, February 1951.

one of the large property holders, that its missionary efforts cannot appeal to the land-hungry peasantry.

We seem to be heading towards a global disaster, not only the destruction of all our comforts, but "an ice-age of the mind." As this trend roughly follows the prophecies of Jesus, we can expect a revival of New Testament eschatology, which will leave the outsider completely baffled, but which will make the disciple of Jesus "to lift up his head for his salvation draweth nigh."

G. Attempts to Abolish War.

The causes for war are to be found in the individual as well as in the inadequacy of human institutions. Let us first consider the causes as we find them in the human heart.

1. Hobbes gives the following description of human emotions which call for warfare:

(a) The desire for gain.
(b) The fear of injury.
(c) The love of glory.
(d) The desire for power.
(e) Hatred and revenge.

The very words, desire, fear, love, hatred, revenge, unveil strong human passions. War appeals to all of them, though once these feelings have been satisfied the appeal has become stale. Luther once remarked: "War intrigues only those who did not experience it."

These emotions drag men down from the human level of reasoning to the subhuman level of brutish desire. While the

reasoning power in men should be growing continually, being a dynamic force in his life, this is generally not true. Sir J. G. Fraser gives the following pessimistic view about cultural inertia:[8)]

> "Thus while the avowed creed of the enlightened minority is constantly changing under the influence of reflection and inquiry, the real though unavowed creed of the mass of mankind appears to be almost stationary, and the reason why it alters so little is that in the majority of men, whether they are savages or outwardly civilized beings, intellectual progress is so slow as to be hardly perceptible. The surface of society, like that of the sea, is in perpetual motion; its depth, like that of the ocean, remains almost unmoved."

In this depth we find the urge to kill, which often breaks into the open, e.g. at some of our sport affairs. One must have heard the screaming crowd shouting at a wrestling-match: "Give him the finish," "Kill him," "Let us see blood," to perceive that these crowds are putty in the hands of a demagogue, who can lead them to destruction, like the famous "Red Piper of Hamelin" who, blowing his flute, led the children into the cold grave of the deep river. Yet we may not limit these outcries of animal passions to crowds with a low intelligence level. Calvin knows better, he even warns the magistrates "to be cautious and not to give way to passions." It is not only the urge to kill which makes us listen to the trumpets, but participation in war can become a way of escape from the everyday drab life. American authors have frequently expressed their convictions in postwar novels, that to get away from the office routine, from the care of a rather tiresome family, was the reason many of the heroes

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[8)] As found in John MacDonald: The Community, first steps in sociology." Toronto, Dent and Sons, 1938.

enlisted. Though this fact should not be generalized too much, many lives are exceedingly empty. The prayer of St. Paul "That we may live a life of peace and quietness" has little attraction for most contemporaries. They only know about the empty quietness, where no other voice can be heard but their own.

2. What can be done about this situation? Could these turbulent emotions be led into quieter channels, or must they sweep away our civilization? The one great remedy of our democracies has always been education. Instead of giving a generally optimistic view of human personality, it should try to implant in us again a healthy distrust of our own selves. But beward of the morbidity of the puritan mind! We might be taught also that it is not true, as Dostoweski says: "Everybody is responsible for everything," but it is true that "many are responsible for many things." It will always be wise to include ourselves among the many. Furthermore, we might learn that war is an interruption of politics and that, on a global scale, it cannot be won any longer. Expressions like "the victor" and "the defeated" are fairly meaningless today.

Yet an up-to-date knowledge about the causes of war, for which the individual can be held responsible, will not be sufficient. The passion of war can only be defeated by a stronger passion for peace. The Christian poet T. S. Elliot recently expressed it thus:

> "The only hope, or else despair,
> lies in the choice of pyre or pyre.
> to be redeemed from fire by fire,
> We only live, only suspire,
> Consumed by either fire or fire."

Against the fire of nationalistic feeling, whether in the west

or in the east, the Christian oecumenical movement arose. This movement, more than anything else, has built bridges from person to person and from nation to nation. While after World War I the feeling of antagonism remained for many years between the former opponents, and in spite of the fact that World War II was fought in such a ruthless way, this hostile feeling did not last so long after this armistice. Unfortunately this feeling of a common calling and destiny is still very weak on the congregational level. The leaders of the different churches know what is in store for us if we do not pull together, but the common Sunday-worshipper is pretty well in the dark as to what it means for him. Three hundred years of separatism are not easy to erase from the minds of Christian people. Yet the oecumenical movement is one of the great hopes of our days. During the "Police action" of the Dutch Government against Indonesia the largest protestant church body in the Netherlands took the very unpopular step to support the Indonesian Christians in their struggle for independence. This was done with the full knowledge that the separation of the Asiatic possessions would lead Holland, and therewith their own members, close to bankruptcy.

Throughout the centuries the churches have tried to awaken a working conscience deciding about the personal impact of war. Yet the sense of duty seems to be duller today than ever. We find a very outspoken disillusionment concerning war, a soldier who feels he has been deceived by a high-geared propaganda machine, has always been eager to turn pacifist. This is a disappointment, not a new vitality of conscience. Men working in

the field of art have been far more successful in stirring up human minds than the church. We should only recall the heated controversy about "All Quiet on the Western Front" (Erick Maria Remarque), or the effects of the solemn English drama, "Journey's End."

3. The effects of education and religion with regard to war upon any individual can only last for a lifetime. Every generation has to make its decision anew. To lighten this heavy task it has been proposed to change deliberately either the human race or to change its environment. Changing the human race through supervised breeding following the laws of science as we use them with livestock, has been proposed by Plato and Nietzche. It has been practised during the short period of time while Nazism was in power in Germany. In England Lord Haldane has spent much work looking into this matter, coming to the conclusion that human beings cannot be treated as animals and follow partly the hereditary laws as they were discovered by Mendel. Thus the hope of breeding a peace-loving humanity seems to be futile.

What is left is the possibility of changing the environment. This must be preceded by a change in social thinking, which is a very double-edged affair. Even if we could overcome the cultural inertia, a new group thinking should be morally orientated. As long as people avoid the revealed moral law and the natural law with its divine origin, we might get all kinds of systems of morality.

4. Let us ask, "What does Christianity advocate in changing some of our institutions which might be responsible for war?" The church system of arbitration disappeared as soon as the judges received a national character. Therefore new institutions for arbitration had to be set up, which could air issues between nations before they got too hot. These organizations have the full support of all churches. Their main weakness always became apparent when they had to enforce a decision.

The dire fate of Abyssinia as it was attacked by Italy, and the disastrous weakness of the League of Nations as it was enforcing the economic sanctions, is still fresh before our mind. The philosophers Rousseau and Kant were convinced that once an institution of arbi~~r~~tration had been set up, the governments concerned in any dispute would obey the arbirtation and seek peace in their own self interest. Unfortunately their optimistic opinion has been totally false. There seems to be a constant possibility of a quick and complete victory over a relatively unarmed enemy; this possibility is too tempting for the great powers, and after they have set up boards of arbitration they destroy them from the inside. However, when we find goodwill on both sides during a dispute, arbitration has given us some wonderful results; the relationship between the United States and Canada during the last hundred years proves this point.

After the first World War Christianity worked for a general disarmament. It knew that powerful standing military forces, a hereditary officer class and a profitable armament industry are very effective institutions for war. It was stated

in the suburban Parisian peace treaties that after the disarmament of the middle powers the western allies would follow. This promise was partly kept by the British, but the French, in hysterical impotence, did not only keep their armies and fortifications, but even enlarged them. Thus a great opportunity for lasting peace was completely missed. In these years a small skeleton force could not only have kept watch over Germany, it would have been sufficient too to check Soviet Russia. It is no mere chance that after the failure of the disarmament conference in London in 1932 Mr. Hitler gained power in Germany and started to rearm at the very first date.

5. The sovereign State is one of the institutions which has a strong bias towards war. Christianity undoubtedly has helped with its creation. After the breakdown of the universal mediaeval empire, Christians supported the theory of the divine rights of Kings, who were not responsible to the people beneath them, but only to God above them. This sounded quite comforting on paper, but left no safeguards against tyranny.

The conscience of the father of his country was supposed to be duly enlightened by his court Chaplain in all questions of right and wrong, yet in practice the chaplain's influence could seldom be recognized. Among the reformers, it was Luther who furthered the development towards the national sovereign state. Though he complained "A pious prince is a rare bird in Heaven", and though he personally was quite independent with respect to his ruler, nevertheless the princes used the Lutheran Reformation to enlarge their power and wealth.

Historically here is a heavy guilt which the Lutheran church has to expiate. Wherever the Catholics and the Calvinists were in opposition towards the existing governments, they were champions of popular rights, and where Luther taught passive obedience, they called for resistance and overthrow. Through their efforts the sovereign state has become a limited state. It seems that Christianity today should follow in this direction. A universal empire, as we partly had it in the Middle Ages, not of a centralized, but of a federal character, might hinder war very effectively. The example of the United States, which after the revolutionary wars changed from a loose association of states into a federation, is considered by many as the path which we should take. Whatever Christianity can do to overcome national pride and ambitions, she will undoubtedly try. One of the foremost reformed theologians of our decade, Emil Brunner, claims that the order of peace is the most urgent problem9). He sees three theoretical possibilities for peace:

(a) Peace by means of a superior uniformly coercive force, as we had it during the Pax Romana. He has no confidence in a triumphvirate of great powers. This one world government does not exist now, though it might come into being after a great global war.

(b) Peace by law. This means historically the period from the Middle Ages to 1914. At that time a corpus christianum existed which exercised moral pressure to keep treaties inviolate. The end of this period was pronounced by the German Chancellor

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9) Emil Brunner: Christianity and the Social Order. Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1945.

von Bethmann-Holweg, when he described a treaty as "a piece of paper."

(c) Peace by law combined with force, included with a supra state organization. This organization, the League of Nations, failed for two reasons:

(1) The League of Nations was a meeting-place to discuss international problems, always trying in the end to find a solution by parliamentary procedure. It was not a supra-state, which could solve the problem of anarchy between the states, as the individual state solves it by force within its boundaries.

(2) The League of Nations had no monopoly of force, no central power among its members was absolutely superior to every single power. Whenever the League was challenged to stop an agressor it had to fail and the most urgent modern problem, the order of peace, remained unsolved.

The first assembly of the World Council of Churches, Amsterdam, Holland, accepted the following resolution concerning the problem of war:

> "We hold that in international, as in national life, justice must be upheld. Nations must suppress their desire to "save Face." This derives from pride, as unworthy as it is dangerous. The churches, for their part, have the duty of declaring those moral principles which obedience to God requires in war as in peace. They must not allow their spiritual and moral resources to be used by the state in war or in peace as a means of propagating an ideology of supporting a cause in which they cannot wholeheartedly concur. They must teach the duty of love and prayer for the enemy in time of war and of reconciliation between victor and vanquished after the war.
>
> "The churches must also attack the causes of war by promoting peaceful change and pursuit of justice. They must stand

> for the maintenance of good faith and the honoring of the pledged word; resist the pretentions of imperialist power, promote the multilateral reduction of armaments, and combat indifference and despair in the face of the futility of war; they must point Christians to that spiritual resistance which grows from settled convictions widely held, themselves a powerful deterrent to war. A moral vacuum inevitably invites an agressor." (First Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Amsterdam, Holland, Findings and Decisions, pp. 55-56.)

This statement is worth studying, because it is a fairly recent one, and because it was accepted by all Christian Churches, though the Roman Catholic Church was voluntarily absent and the Russian Orthodox Church was not allowed to attend. A shortened form of this program seems to include these propositions:

1. The Churches and all their members must keep their independence against any encroaching state. Thus the churches have learned the bitter lesson of the Russian revolution, where the Church was too closely connected with the Czarist regime and collapsed together with it.

The Church in Germany succeeded only partly in freeing itself from the bondage of an absolute government, yet it was surely worth striving for it. Today all states are in temptation to use the Churches as a part of their smoothly running propaganda machine. In wartime, this desire becomes irresistible, and to keep independent the Churches will reckon with persecution. According to the statement published in Amsterdam, they are ready to face it. This would bring them close again to the Apostolic Church with all its obvious miseries and hidden glories.

2. A very hopeful development is the declaration of the independent Churches to attack the causes of war, both in the

human heart and among the nations. National pride is mentioned as one of the emotional factors leading to war; especially in case of defeat this will be of utmost importance. The Churches realize that a defence of the status quo is another cause for war. This applies very much to the colonial people. Happily, we can report that the Churches in South Africa have accepted the challenge of the Malan-Government, they are working for a better integration of the coloured people within the Dominion, against a very dangerous and reactionary policy of segregation.

Another field of labour for the Churches will be the pursuit of justice, e.g. the revision of unjust treaties.

3. The Churches will try to create a moral sphere, because "A moral vacuum inevitably invites agression."

This is the great problem of Western Europe; rearmament and an American general are not enough. The most elaborate weapons will do no good if there is no will to use them and if there is no goal to fight for. The churches, so far, have failed to create the promised moral sphere. In Germany a lively discussion goes on between famous leaders of the Evangelical Church; the venerable Bishop Wurm calls for national resistance in case of a Russian attack while the Reverend Niemoller demands non-resistance.

The same disagreements of minds can be observed in France, where the Dominican Order is for non-resistance and the Jesuits for resistance. The greatest minds of contemporary French Roman Catholic theology cannot agree; Gibson advocates "To lie low", while Jacques Maritain wants to unroll the banner of resistance.

For the outsider these disagreements seem to be discouraging, but they really make for a more vital and personal morality than the former authoritative approach, which treated people as if they were without reason or will. One thing is certain, the Christians oppose any sacrificial war system a la Mussolini which claims that it is a high pleasure to die on the altar of your country, without asking any questions. We will not forget that none of these "great leaders" themselves felt the urge to do so.

4. Christians oppose the other extreme too, which claims that all human life is absolutely sacred and may never be sacrificed. The great Saint Albert Schweitzer for some time took this position, he even went so far that all life is sacred. But as a doctor he found out that to cure human beings he had to kill germs.

It might be necessary for the larger unit of Society that the individual will have to sacrifice his life. It is morally superior to lay it down, knowing why and what for, than simply to allow the Government to take it away and use it. Instead of despair and indifference, the Churches try to make a personal decision possible again.

Should war break out, the Churches promise to exhort their people towards love and prayer for the enemy. This is a very tough proposition, as hatred is now already being stirred up to a dangerous degree. Against the slogan "Let us win the war first" the Churches will declare "It is the peace which counts." Thus the word of reconciliation will finally have social implications.

5. The Christian contribution towards solving the problem of war is far-reaching. Yet the Churches have little power to enforce their ideals. The time has passed forever, when rulers of nations could be put in ban for waging war. Christianity is limited like any other religion, it can proclaim its truth, and has to wait whether it will be lived.

Conclusion

War is still a grim necessity; in its path not only material values are destroyed, but all human ideals are endangered. It is the task of the Churches to preserve the moral perspective, both before and during a war. Man may never be degraded into a mere means, but always remains an end. The spiritual health of the armed forces as well as of the home-front, might be strengthened by the Churches. In times of war people realize that there is no security, whether social, political or economic. People will be forming their own idols, the deification of their own country, of their own "high cause," will be particularly tempting. Even in wartime Christianity must uphold common values and a common faith; guilt can be found on all sides and without forgiveness, there will be no new life.

PART II

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PROBLEM OF PROPERTY AND OWNERSHIP

Two prayerful statements about the problem of **property**:

> Oh Eternal God, one Father of all, who teachest us by reason that all the riches of the world are made by thee for man's common use, and that by natural law not one of them belongs to one man more than to another; direct us, we pray thee, in obedience to Thy law, that all things may serve all men, to the increase of Thy glory; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

- Saint Anselm, Teaching on **Property**.

> Oh God our Father, in whom we know that those ensnared in penury of things needful for the body cannot set their minds on Thee; have pity, we beseech Thee, on the poor ... Thou, O Lord, providest enough for all men, and Thy goodness is common to all; we, by our greediness, have disordered Thy world; give Thou~~gh~~ meat to the hungry and drink to the thirsty .... and give Thou hope and courage to them that are out of heart .... for Thine only Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

- From an Elizabethan Prayer Book.

CHAPTER I

THE BIBLICAL AND MEDIAEVAL APPROACH TOWARDS PROPERTY

1. Definitions of property and ownership

Jurists have often been accused that, in their definitions, they have exempted private property from all legal restrictions. However, when we look into the different laws, we find the principle "Salus publica suprema lex" generally observed.

The French Civil Code (544) defines ownership as "the right to make use and dispose of a corporeal thing absolutely, provided it be not forbidden by law or statute." The Code of the German Empire (903) has this to say: "The proprietor of a thing may use it as he likes and exclude from it all outside interference, as long as the law or the rights of others are not violated."

Blackstone[1] defines the right of property in the following way: "It consists in the free use, enjoyment and disposal of all acquisitions, without

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[1] Commentary 1, Vol. 1, page 138.

any control or diminution, save only by the law of the land."

The scholars, who follow the scholastic tradition, present a little different definition, e.g. J. Messner[2). "In private ownership the essential nature of a right is most perfectly typified, for it means the exclusive and unrestricted right of control over things. It involves free disposal by the owner (use, consumption, sale, donation, bequest), the rights to the fruits of property (whether or not these are the result of work), the right to make the thing owned a source of gain for the owner within the framework of the socio-economic process and in conformity with its end. A right is always power of control."

Although the latter definition is quite comprehensive, we feel that a better one can be found by W. E. Moore[3): "Property consists in institutionally defined and regulated rights of persons, (or other social units) in scarce values."

[2) Social Ethics, Herder Company, St. Louis, 1949. page 785.

[3) The emergence of new property conceptions in America, Journal of Legal and Political Sociology, April, 1943.

This definition contains eight terms describing property, giving a convenient outline which we shall meet again in these chapters.

1. Property consists in values, these values may be tangible; e.g. land machine-tools, books, or they may be intangible, e.g. a patent, or professional goodwill; a stock or a bond representing a claim to income.

2. Property values are scarce, therefore St. Thomas remarked, that there were no property problems in paradise. The scarcity of all values makes it necessary to determine "who gets what" in society.

3. Property is a right, or a complex of rights; it is best thought of as a bundle of rights, though there is still a common tendency to think of property as a thing rather than a claim.

4. Property-rights are defined, and this is a task of our various agencies which specialize in lawmaking.

5. Property-rights are defined by institutions, and apart from the human community property is without meaning.

6. Property-rights are regulated. This means that society not only protects property-rights, but also modifies them; e.g. a citizen may own a gun, but its use is regulated by law.

7. Property rights are assigned to persons. Society not only defines the relations of persons to scarce values, it thereby also defines the relations of persons to persons; if there is no person, e.g. the modern corporation, the law uses a legal friction: The "corporate personality."

8. Social units, other than the individual, may hold property. In no social system have property-rights been restricted to individuals, in our society collective property becomes more and more important as compared with individual property, at least if consumer goods are excluded.

2. Property and ownership in the Old Testament

The Old Testament proclaims, that all property belongs to God, who made it. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24, vs. 1).

God is the real owner, man is his steward;

"Man's authority to say "This is mine" rests, finally, on his power to say "I am God's"."[4)]

God is not only the Creator of all property, but wealth is His gift and therefore it is good. This gift is a part of God Himself, and therefore it cannot be evil or a snare which leads the recipient into trouble.

The blessing of its original owner is contained with it, it is not a sale commodity. God honours the faithful patriarchs and judges through material rewards; "And the Lord was with Josef, and he was a prosperous man." (Genesis 39, vs. 2)

However, this doctrine contains a great difficulty which often bothered the pious men of the Old Covenant. If God rewards faithful service, what about the wicked, who despise and mock Him? One answer is given in the 49th Psalm, which seems to be typical of the Jewish outlook before the national disaster of the exile.

"Be not afraid when one is made rich,
  When the glory of his house is increased;
For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away,
  His glory shall not descend after him ....
They that trust in their wealth,
  And boast themselves in the multitude of
                their riches,

[4)] Henry Scott Holland, Property, London, 1913, page 192.

None of them can by any means redeem himself,
  That he should not see the pit ....
Wise men die, the fool and the brutish together
                                                    perish,
  And leave their wealth to others.
Their graves are their houses forever,
  Though they call their lands after their own
                                                    names.
But man abideth npt in honor;
  He is like the beasts that perish."

In the New Testament parable of the rich fool death is the great leveler; even the mighty rulers who could call their lands after their own names, will reach the inevitable end. In this psalm the end is the grave, but in others it is a judgment beyond the tomb, where the wicked will receive their due sentence.

The Catholic Encyclopedia states in the article "Property" that there is a tendency in history towards a development from collective property to private property. The Old Testament bears this out.

At the times of the patriarchs while the Israelites still lived as nomadic shepherds, the patriarchs controlled the common property, which the family as a whole used. As Israel settled down into villages and then into cities with their commercial life, the nomadic principle that wealth belongs not

to an individual, but to a whole family or community, becomes weaker. Yet the ideal of common possession lived oh.

We find well-meant but wholly ineffective laws to uphold family property; e.g. the law of the sabbathical year. "At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: every creditor shall release that which he has lent unto his neighbour".[5] Another law dealt with the "Sabbath of Sabbaths" or the Jubilee or Liberty year, in which "Ye shall return every man unto his possession".[6]

Another law tried to keep the family property intact even through the female line. This was done not so much to protect the women, but to preserve the inheritance so that it should not pass to another family.

Another group of laws which were designed to protect the family property were the laws of levirate marriage. This law was very advantageous for any man who married his brother's widow, because

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[5] Deut. 15, vs. 1 and following.

[6] Lev. 25, vs. 13.

if the deceased had no offspring the property would pass to his surviving brother.

Western civilization has been deeply influenced by the property commandment, "Thou shalt not steal." This order establishes protection and equality for all property-holders. It is true that this equality is sometimes limited; women are not men's equals, but even they have their property rights.

Slavery was not challenged, although even slaves had rights.7) Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the rights of the individual are established and the rights of the common man against the oppression of the rich are defended.

One of the unforgettable scenes in the prophetic struggle for the rights of the weak is the encounter between Elijah and king Ahab in the vineyard stolen from Naboth. The enraged servant of God tells the ruler that the double crime of robbery and murder will not be tolerated. "Has thou~~gh~~ killed, and also taken possession? In the place where dogs lick the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood".8)

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7) Jeremia, Chapter 34.

8) 1st Kings 21, vs. 19.

Not only things can be stolen, a man can be robbed of his wife's affections. This is what David had done, violating the property rights of one of his army officers. Before the whole court his misdeed is revealed in the story of the rich man who took the poor man's one ewe lamb, a clear defense of property rights.9)

Sometimes a contradiction seems to arise between the idea that property is a divine blessing and the prophetic outbursts against the rich as wicked. The explanation, of course, is that the original intended blessing changes into a curse, when property is acquired by exploitation and profits are made at the expense of one's fellowman.

One can imagine the righteous fury of the prophet when one reads a passage like Amos 6, vs. 1-6:

> "Woe to them that are at ease .... in the mountain of Samaria ... that put far away the evil day and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; .... that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils, with never a single thought for the bleeding wounds of the nation." (Moffat translation)

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9) 2nd Samuel 12, vs. 1-14.

Through the bitter experience of the exile some Jews learned an additional lesson with respect to property: namely that service and self-sacrifice are better than wealth.

Nehemiah heard that some of his brethern had to mortgage their fields, vineyards and houses and even had to sell their sons and daughters into slavery to buy corn in time of drought. Whereupon he set the right example: He lent them money without interest, and induced others to do likewise, refused his salary as governor, and fed many people at his table.10)

Yet at the end of this account he adds: "Remember unto me o my God, for good, all that I have done for this people." He still expects a reward for the charitable use of his property, but gradually the view grows that sacrifice has its own reward. This conviction forms a bridge from the Old into the New Testament.

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10)Nehemia, Chapter 5.

3. "Beware of Covetousness" (The teachings of Jesus).

The teachings of Jesus with relation to property, tangible or intangible, are quite different from the way in which modern man regards wealth. It can truly be said, that a gulf separates them. While riches to most of us seem to be highly desirable, Jesus shares the opposite view. He says: "Be careful, they are dangerous."

He frequently dwells on the perils of property, but He does not seem to be much concerned with the dangers of poverty. It is true, that poverty in His time and in the climate of Palestine could not be so harmful as poverty today in Canada. Yet the difference of time and place does not explain His attitude.

He knew what poverty was; He did not talk about it in the style of a well-paid social reformer. "With uncontrolled power to possess all, He owned nothing. He had no place to be born in but another man's stable, no closet to pray in but the wilderness, no place to die but on the cross of an enemy, and no grave, but one lent by a friend."11) The truth is, that He sees a relationship between the poverty in

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11) W. M. Thausere: The Land and the Book, page 407.

earthly means and the poverty of the human spirit. Though poverty is not essential to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, it makes it much easier. The poor in spirit are probably also poor in other respects.

Jesus does not condemn possession of property as such or denounce ownership in land, goods or money. However, He tries to unveil the dangerous impact of them on the human personality. Riches are deceitful,12) giving their owner a false feeling of security.

Rauschenbusch described the effect of wealth in a twofold way:

1. Wealth lifts the individual out of the wholesome dependence on his fellowman.

2. Wealth lifts the individual out of the full sense of responsibility for his fellowman. (Christianity and the Social Crisis, London, 1908). But this description is rather onesided, not only has the relationship with his fellow-beings been destroyed, but man feels autonomous against his Creator.

The desire for wealth seems to stir up the human soul more than any other passion. Therefore Jesus says: "Beware of covetousness."13)

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12)Mt. 13, vs. 22.

13)Luc. 12, vs. 13-15.

Throughout the ages, the Church continued to repeat this warning, calling it the sin of avarice, with just as little success as Jesus in His day.

Once man has decided that property is the goal of his life, he starts to accumulate earthly treasures. Jesus knows what happens to material values, the moth eats the rare silken garments and the rust corrupts the most precious containers. The emphasis is on the word earthly, meaning: temporal and destroyable; the true riches are somewhere else.

As a keen observer of human nature, Jesus knows that it is impossible to serve God and Mammon.14) Both demand the allegiance of the whole person; trying to serve both of them will lead to a split personality, which can be observed so often.

The positive principle in the matter of property is expressed in Luc. 12, vs. 15. "A man's life consistest not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Or as He said to the devil:

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14)Mt. 6, vs. 24.

"Man does not live by bread alone", fellowship with God is more essential.

Temporal possessions are not an evil in themselves, the hermits who left all possessions to live a solitary life in the desert, misunderstood Jesus. Possessions might easily become an evil, something which was felt throughout the history of the Christian Church. We need only recall the great movement of monasticism, especially the Franciscans, or remember the Waldensians and the Anabaptists, or the Hutterites of today, the latter being represented in Alberta.

Wealth often became a hindrance for people who felt the urge to join a small group of Jesus' disciples. The best known is the rich young ruler15) whom Jesus asked to sacrifice all his possessions, which should not be taken as a general rule but was addressed to one particular person. In his case property robbed him of the purity of heart, to will the one thing which is needful. It was not the possessions as such which had to be surrendered, but rather the surrender of the person, who gives his will

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15) Marc 10, vs. 17-31.

over to God. This has been the traditional exposition of the encounter between the rich young man and Jesus. The theologian of the "Social Gospel", Rauschenbusch, gives a different interpretation:

> "We think of the salvation of the individual in the life to come, and find it hard that so fine a young fellow should be barred out of heaven because he was rich. Jesus was thinking of the righteous society on earth which He was initiating and of the young man's fitness for that. Suppose the young man had left his property and had thus joined the discipleship? How would that have affected the spirit of the group? Would not the others have felt jealously that he was in a class by himself? If Jesus had shown him favour, would not even the Master's motives have been suspected? If he had replenished the common purse from his private wealth, it would have given them all a more opulent living; it would have attracted selfish men and would have paralyzed the influence of Jesus on the poor. Then the crowds would have been at his heels, not merely for healing, but for the loaves and fishes, with dessert added. Judas would have been deeply pleased with such a reinforcement of the apostolate, but Jesus would have gone through the same sorrow which came upon Francis of Assisi, when property was forced upon his order and its early spirit was corrupted. It is all very well to say that rich and poor are alike in Christ, but only exceptional characters like Jesus himself can sit at a rich man's table and be indifferent to the fact that he is rich. Others can forget it for a while under the pressure of a great common danger or sorrow or joy, but in general the sense of equality will prevail only where substantial equality exists. The presence of the

> rich young man would have been ruinous to the spirit of the discipleship and would have put a debased interpretation on the hope of the Kingdom. Jesus did not ask him to hand over his property for the common purse, as the Church in later times did constantly, but simply to turn it back to social usefulness and come down to the common level." (Christianity and the Social Crisis, London, 1908, pp. 76-77)

The weakness of this explanation is obvious, the social side of the Christian fellowship is stressed exclusively, the impact of the individual on an existing group is described with much imagination, but the eternal fate of the young ruler is completely neglected. It seems that the traditional exposition is still preferable.

While so far we have mainly emphasized the negative teachings of Jesus with regard to property, the positive teachings are even more helpful.

In his famous parables of the talents, of the rich man and Lazarus, of the rich fool, he is concerned with the right use of property. Absolute ownership does not exist, property is subordinated to human need.

The greatest example is the good Samaritan, who employs his property for a wounded enemy, who gives his time, his strength, his knowledge, the use of his donkey, his money, and who changes a hotel into a hospital. All possessions and occupations must be related to the supreme end of all human life, to the Kingdom of God, a realm of right relations between man and God and man and man.

The positive teachings of Jesus in the matter of property can be expressed in another way: Property is both a test and a trust. Nowadays we use the word stewardship to describe human obligations regarding material wealth. This attitude can express itself in a number of ways. In the forefront of Jesus' thought is the duty of almsgiving, which should not be confused with the modern understanding of charity. Charity endangers both the giver and the receiver. Almsgiving has as its basis justice. Jesus has never worked out a program to overcome pauperism, He only stated realistically: "Ye have the poor always." He knew that under any

economic system there will be a certain amount of poverty, which should never degenerate into depravity. But all of us go through periods of scarcity and anxiety, like ore goes through the oven to become pure and thus valuable. A completely different situation would arise if people, for one reason or the other, were condemned to remain in the state of constant poverty.

The remedy for accidental poverty is almsgiving, an act of justice and not of mercy; from here the road opens towards urgent reform of property and ownership whenever justice demands it. Almsgiving is not supposed to soothe the rich man's heart nor give him glory of man, but is a necessary contribution towards social equity. However, "All the hard questions connected with pauperism lie beyond the horizon of the Gospel."16)

Another aspect of stewardship is fidelity to our daily task, which is divinely expected from us. This part of Jesus' teachings has been stressed

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16)Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, London, 1931, Vol. I, p.60.

by the Protestant reformers and we will meet it again in a later part of the thesis.

All our property should be at the complete disposal of God. "We are pensioners on His bounty and trustees for what He lends to us." The Churches of today all have their stewardship-programs with which they endeavour to reach this goal. As a rule both the end and the means have been watered down to such a degree that the teachings of the gospel are scarcely recognizable. There we read: "And they forsook all." Here we are approached with tithing and similar schemes which might fill the Church treasuries, but influence social conditions very little. The true meaning of stewardship is the willingness towards self-surrender, to give up all whenever it is demanded. When the old garment of society is worn out to such a degree that it cannot be repaired any longer, new conditions demand far-reaching changes. Christians should be in the front, not so much demanding these changes, but showing personally how they can be accomplished.

4. The Communism of Love.

The first Christian congregation grew up in Jerusalem, and had many features, which made it quite distinct from the surrounding Jewish community. One of these marks, namely communal property instead of private property, is described in the book of Acts as follows:

> "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any one of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."
>
> "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands and houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold."
>
> "And laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man as he had need."17)

The force behind this collective property was a common expectation, that Christ would soon return and establish His Kingdom on earth. The Christians in Jerusalem simply followed the custom

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17) Acts 4, vs. 32, 34, 35; also Chapter 2, vs. 44 and 45.

of the first twelve disciples, who had a common purse and a common life. This communism, if we may call it so, has nothing to do with production, "they sold all their possessions and goods," and tried to distribute from their common treasury according to need, so that nobody lacked the necessities of life. Whether there was any production at all, and whether everybody produced individually, we do not know.

The right of private property was not questioned, as the inciden~~ce~~t of Ananias proves, "While it remained, was it not thine own?" And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" It is not that he kept back part of the price, which made him a hypocrite, but it is the lie that he brought only part of the price received, trying to deceive the apostle, as though he contributed the full amount. "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Just as there was no pressure on any of the members to sell their house and land, so too there was no hostility against the institution of the family.

The latter is always found in contemporary communism, which feels that the institution of the family is a constant threat against collective property.

This "generosity" as Rauschenbuch calls it, lasted only for a short time in Jerusalem. Why it was discontinued cannot be said with certainty. Did the hope for a speedy return of Christ fade out? Did a period of disappointment follow the early enthusiasm, and everybody go back into his own? Did this communism of Love prove itself unworkable? Did extreme poverty arise, which made a general collection necessary among the sister congregations outside of Jerusalem? As the record is silent, speculation is useless.

Yet this experiment had a profound influence throughout the following centuries. It was felt that a disciple of Christ can either have an appetite for the earthly, or for the eternal. Just as the first Christians in Jerusalem had differed from their Jewish neighbours, so the Christians in later centuries felt that they had to be different.

Ascetism entered the Church, first in the form of the hermit, who desired to leave the world behind as far as possible, and then in the shape of monasticism. The hermits were radicals, especially with regard to property. One, St. Macarius, surprised a robber in his hut, who was busy trying to carry away his few belongings. The Saint pretended to be a stranger, helped him to carry the things out, and went so far in his co-operation as to load them on the waiting cart.

The monks, too, desired to withdraw from the world, but in their cloisters they built up a complete society with all its necessities. They promised to have no property, hoping thus to imitate the life of Christ and his apostles. St. Benedict wrote:18) "Above everything the vice of private ownership is to be cut off by the roots in the monastery. Let no one presume either to give or to receive anything without permission of the abbot, nor to keep anything as his own, neither book, nor writing tablets, nor pen,

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18)Reg. Ben. 33, as found in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

nor anything whatsoever, since it is unlawful for them to have their bodies or wills in their own power."

This institution of the monastery had no intention of changing property rights everywhere, nor did it primarily want to civilize the surrounding districts, though this was often accomplished unintentionally, especially in the case of Germany. "The object of withdrawal is to achieve a life, whose ideal is different from and largely at variance with that pursued by the majority of mankind." (Catholic Encyclopedia)

This authoritative definition refutes the claim that monasticism is not so much Christian, but comes close to the communistic ideas of Plato. Plato's guardians did not abstain from private property as an expression of complete self-negation, but for pragmatic reasons.

> "....none of them should have any property of his own beyond what is absolutely necessary; neither should they have a private house or store closed against one who has a mind to

> enter; their provisions should be only such as are required by trained warriors, who are men of temperance and courage; they should agree to receive from the citizens a fixed rate of pay, enough to meet the expenses of the year and no more; and they will go to mess and live like soldiers in a camp. Gold and silver we will tell them that they have from God; the diviner metal is within them, and they have therefore no need of the dross which is current among men, and ought not to pollute the divine by any such earthly admixture; for that commoner metal has been the source of many unholy deeds, but their own is undefiled. And they alone of all the citizens may not touch or handle silver or gold, or be under the same roof with them, or wear them, or drink from them. And this will be their salvation, and they will be the saviours of the state."19)

The Communism of Love in Jerusalem has shown that a common spirit has a tendency to obliterate property distinctions. Short-lived though it was, it has presented a goal worth striving for. Monasticism in some respects is a communism of love too, but the force behind it seems to be fear, that man might be overpowered by the lure of property, and therefore escape seems to be advisable. The x scope of its love is rather narrow; it has a very

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19) Plato, Republic. Translated by J. Jowett, University Press, London. 3d Edition, 1908, Vol. I, Bk. III.

limited concern for those who are outside of its walls, it does not try to set an example, which can be followed by all, it is for the few who take the evangelical counsel of poverty seriously. Thus, the many who cannot accomplish this are put into the lower-bracket of second-rate Christians. Within its walls is common property and the true imitation of Christ, outside is private property and the rush for this world's goods. This seems to be a unsatisfactory solution of the problem of property.

5. Property belongs into the ius gentium.

Many theories have been set up to justify private property, but the Roman Catholic Church has rejected them all, with the exception of one, which bases property on natural law.

The personality theory, in which private property is a necessary supplement and expansion of the personality, has been repudiated, because it is unconcerned with the poor and with children.

The primitive contract theory (Hugo Grotius) did not fare better, since it is historically imposs-

ible; and even if we could trace it back into early times, why should the primitive contract be binding for us today?

Hobbes proposed the legal theory, "The State is a fountain-head of all the rights, which the subjects have and consequently also as a source of private ownership." This would give the State the right to introduce collective ownership, a possibility which worries some theologians.

The labour theory which states that private property is the right, which every man has to the product of his labour, has not been accepted, though it was proposed by eminent men like Locke, Adam Smith, Ricardo and Say. This theory gives no answer about the material used in any kind of labour, and about the means of production.

In an Encyclical, called Motes Proprio (1903), Pope Pius X lays down two principles:20)

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20) Catholic Encyclopedia.

1. Unlike the beast, man has on earth not only the right of use, but a permanent right of ownership and this is true not only of those things which are consumed in their use, but also of those which are not consumed by their use.

2. "Private property is under all circumstances, be it the fruit of labour or acquired by conveyance or donation, a natural right, and everybody may make such reasonable disposal of it as he thinks fit."

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church respecting property goes back to St. Thomas of Aquino, who analyses private property as a part of the ius gentium. It seems convenient to give a short summary of how, to St. Thomas, the different levels of law are related. First there is the eternal law, which is the purpose and rational rule which the creator has in his mind. This eternal law has been revealed in the divine law, which is interpreted by the theologian. The philosopher working with his

reason only, is interested in the natural law, which is defined by St. Thomas as "A certain kind of participation by us in the eternal law."[21)]

Knowing that there is a natural law does not necessarily mean that we know, in detail, what the law is; the natural law is an unwritten law, it has only one absolute principle: "To do good and to avoid evil." How this principle will work out, must be decided by human reason, leading us into the secondary and tertiary precepts of the law. These precepts have often been called positive laws, meaning that they are the actual laws of states. A comparison of all these laws throughout different times give us the ius gentium, which is closer to the natural law than to the positive law. Property does not belong strictly either to natural or positive law, but is in between, found in conjunction with the ius gentium.

"The right of private ownership will belong to the ius gentium, if in the judgment of reasonable and good-willed men, it is a mode of possession most

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[21)] I-II 96 2 ad 3.

favourable to order and most conformed to the best conditions of human social existence."22)

> "Every means necessary to attain the essential ends of human life is imposed on human conscience by reason of the secondary precepts of the Natural law, but is rather added to it as a discovery of human reason. It is natural and necessary for man to prepare his own being, to propagate his own species and to live in Society. Reason concludes that certain conditions are necessary to make possible the attainments of these natural ends, viz. conditions such as peace, order, justice, stability, etc. Private property appears as being precisely of certain social value, as being apt to secure the above conditions, and to that extent it is necessary for human life. This conclusion will not have the same force for all people and all times."23)

St. Thomas selected his words carefully as he analyzed property (II - II, 66, 1 and 2), the terms used are:

Dominium - The widest term, applying to any property right whatsoever.

Possessio - Embraces both collective and private ownership.

Proprietas - The right to private property.

Communitas possessionum - collective ownership.

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22) Drostan Maclaren, Private Property and the Natural Law, Blackfriars, Oxford, 1948, p. 14.

23) Ibid. p.15.

As a first step he develops a basic doctrine of possession, which shows God as the only possessor of all things. Man can have no participation in this dominion of God over the nature and substance of things. Only by Divine providence has he received the privilege of participating in God's dominion, in the sense that he can use material creation since man alone is created with reason and will.

He must use the material created to attain the end appointed for him by God. From this end man derives certain human rights, e.g. man must conserve his being, thus he has a right to a livelihood; man must propagate his species, thus to protect, to nourish and to educate his children, he has a general right of possession.

The Mediaeval Church condemned Wicliff and Huss because they based the dominion of man on charity and grace instead of on natural law. St. Thomas teaches that man has dominion because of a two-fold reason:

1. On the nature of man as a rational being.

2. On the natural destiny of material creation, which is to serve him.

Yet, so far, the question is left open whether this "right of possession" should take the form of private or common property, of individual or collective ownership. This question is decided in the second step of the analysis, and leads to the doctrine of private ownership.

While every man has an absolute natural right to possess and use the things necessary to preserve his life, the fact that this right is best exercised by way of private ownership is a conclusion reached by human reason, working on the principles of natural law.

Pope Leo XIII says in his Encyclical "Rerum Norarum": "The limits of private possession have been left to be fixed by man's own industry and by the laws of individual races." With respect to

possession in general there can be no alternative, man must either possess material things or else die. But with regard to the particular way in which possession is exercised, there are numerous alternatives, varying from private ownership on the one hand, to extreme Communism, as in religious orders, on the other, with numerous forms of more or less corporate possessions in between.

To arrive at a solution of these alternatives we must ask, what is the end of property? Following a gradual analysis we arrive at a number of conclusions:

1. All material creation is naturally destined for the common use of mankind.

2. It cannot be used, as it is found, it must be organized, it must become human and therewith rational.

3. How can this be done most effectively? In the form of private property? A modern scholastic

writer, G. Messner[24], claims that the institution of private property is best as proved by experience and reason. Man has a natural desire for property; its acquisition gives him great satisfaction. This is undoubtedly true, but what about the dangers involved? What about the sin of covetousness?

Some Churches in segregating and numbering the commandments have gone so far, that they enumerate two commandments against covetousness. They feel that the natural desire for property is one of the greatest temptations confronting man; it gives temporary satisfaction, but in the long run makes man more desirous.

Another argument for private property runs like this: Man can only be charitable if he owns something. It is a strange argument, because exceptions, like poverty or the consequences of a disaster, are used to establish a general rule. This proposition has furthermore been weakened by the historical observation that, in a modern society, individual and

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[24] Op. cit.

club charity, based on the system of private property, have been failures. Only since we have adopted a dystem of social welfare, based on collective property, are we approaching satisfactory results.

Another plea for private property points to family life; the rearing of children presupposes private property. This is undoubtedly true for the sphere of consumption, but how often is it true as far as the means of production are concerned? Not only Catholic social ethics, but Christian social ethics in general, have a tendency to consider the average family as a unit in the country, making its living by farming. If this were true, a fairly strong case could be established for private property, but we know from experience and statistics that this is an unrealistic approach since it omits the vast majority of urban families. Many families are quite successful in raising their children without possessing the means of production.

For the principle of private property it is furthermore contended that it encourages creative development in the economic sphere. This is the common argument for private enterprise, basing itself on the freedom it gives to initiative. If we look at the booms only, this is correct, but if we take the depressions into account, many are not likely to be convinced by the merits of private enterprise.

The final argument of G. Messner tries to prove that private property encourages people to provide for the future. The validity of this reasoning always has some flaws; e.g., what provision can one make if one is incapacitated in early life, or has had bad luck with one's savings and investments? In an industrial age, with masses of people near the poverty line it becomes a mockery, and hence our social conscience has provided for old age pensions, and a long and lengthening list of various insurance schemes

against contingencies - some of these schemes being voluntary, and others of a kind, that can only be adequate when they are compulsory and state run.

The scholastics, following the analysis of St. Thomas, acknowledge that the institution of private property is not always most effective and under all circumstances. Messner25) says: "Any system of social economy is in conflict with natural law to the extent, that it precludes a proportionate distribution of the goods produced in the cause of social cooperation by the working of the resources available in the community."

Yet the scholastic theologians bring private property in through the backdoor claiming that it is necessary in view of the defects in human nature, caused by the loss of original justice.

"In justice all ought to belong to all, it is sin which has made private property." "God ordered the earth to be the common possession of all. Nature therefore granted a common right, it is usurpation that has made it a private right."26)

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25) Op. cited, pp. 786.

26) St. Ambrose, Homily on Naboth's Vineyard.

"Rerum appropratio non est de prima intentione naturae, secundum quam omnia sunt communia."[27]

Small groups of people may be able to overcome the temptation to usurp a common right, but according to the schoolmen they are an exception; no social teaching can be based on them, but only on the quasi universal experience of sin. This is called a realistic doctrine of property.

Thus, under the normal conditions of human life, a regime of private property is the best means of insuring an equitable and peaceful distribution of the fruits of the earth among all men. This does not exclude another arrangement, e.g. the idealistic doctrine of Plato concerning property in the fifth book of "The Laws". Yet the scholastics believe that Communism would only work in an ideal state, in which men were like gods; the possibility of collective ownership is never taken too seriously. The general trend of thought seems to be that the

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[27] St. Thomas, 4, sent. d 33 2, 2.

nature of society requires the institution of private property.

As social functions of private property the following are enumerated:

1. It makes a clear demarcation possible of what is mine and thine. Otherwise this has to be decided by endless disputes which might be democractically decided by a majority decision or which might lead to the use of force. Furthermore it is plain that common property is difficult to control. How shall it be done? By experts only, who might miss the national point of view just as frequently as advisory committees which were recruited from the rank and file of the population. If you choose group representation, will those members overcome the inherent selfishness of their particular party? The problem of control is a difficult one, though some solution will be achieved by the British nationalization of basic industries.

2. Another social function of private property is that it is supposed to create personal interest; a

Russian proverb claims: "Give a man a barren rock for his own, and he will make of it a flowering garden." Yet, is it really necessary to arouse personal interest in property? Can it not generally be observed that the average man has already too much desire to gain possessions? Must we not train people to overcome this desire and to serve collective property without being personally rewarded in the exact proportion of the energy spent? The existence of an efficient and hard working Civil Service is a reminder, that effort is not nicely adjusted to personal rewards.

3. The institution of private property makes exchange of goods by trade possible, public ownership ultimately results in the supplying of goods from official warehouses.

4. It creates richly diversified social functions, while common ownership degrades society into a mere mass; private property limits the encroachment of the state. This is true if we put private property versus the principle of common ownership. The nineteenth century looked at the problem along those lines. Today

we try to find the realms in which each of the two principles work best. This will eliminate a good deal of the foregoing criticism.

5. Through private property economic and political power is distributed through society, and is not concentrated in the hands of one group, namely the government. This proposition contains an amount of truth differing in various countries. Sometimes private property is in the hands of only few people, who work together as a class and do not guarantee any distribution of property. There has always been a strong aversion against such a system; e.g. the anti-trust or combines laws and heavy succession duties. It would have been wiser to state that any one-sided concentration of property is dangerous.

G. Messner summarizes his findings, that private property serves and protects the natural order of society and the political community. It

stands for freedom, whether it is personal, social, political, or economic, for freedom (he says) is indivisible. He has a strong bias for private property.

This attitude was not so marked among the Church-fathers and theologians of the Middle Ages. Professor E. G. Carlyle explains the Medieavel conception of property in this way:28)

> "To the Fathers the only natural condition is that of common ownership and individual use. The world was made for the common benefit of mankind, that all should receive from it what they require.... They admit however, that human nature being what it is, avaricious and vicious, it is impossible for men to live normally under the condition of common ownership. This represents the more perfect way of life, and this principle was represented in the organization of monastic life, ... (but) for mankind in general, some organization of ownership became necessaryk and this was provided by the State and its laws .... Private property is therefore practically the creation of the State, and is defined, limited and changed by the State. While however the Fathers recognize the legal right of private property, as a suitable and

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28)A.J. Carlyle, Property, Its Duties and Rights. 2nd Ed. pp. 117-132.

necessary concession to human infirmity .... they are also clear that from the religious and moral standpoint the position of private property is somewhat different.
...."Whatever conventional organization may be found necessary for practical adjustment of human affairs, the ultimate nature of things still holds good. Private property is allowed, but only in order to avoid the danger of violence and confusion; and the institution cannot override the natural right of man to obtain what he needs from the abundance of that which the earth brings forth. This is what the Fathers mean when they call the maintenance of the needy an act of justice, not of mercy; for it is justice to give a man that which is his own, and the needy have a moral right to that which they require."

CHAPTER II

THE MODERN CHRISTIAN APPROACH

6. The attitude of the Protestant reformers towards property.

The sixteenth century experienced a commercial revolution, which changed its life just as much as the industrial revolution changed the nineteenth century. Luther stood bewildered before the complexity of his economic environment. He preached fiery sermons and published thundering pamphlets against the taking of interest, against monopolies, against high prices, which he blamed on the merchants and not on the discovery of the New World with its flow of metal and accompanying inflation. When his economic analysis finally led nowhere, he blamed the Church of Rome because she was too lax in dealing with the profiteers or because her own financial machinations were responsible for all economic evils.

In his whole outlook he was completely mediaeval and reproduced in a simplified form the teachings of the schoolmen. His goal was the same as theirs, namely a Church-civilization, where the whole of life was regulated by the clergy in accordance with the Scriptures.

> "There can be no better instructions in ....all transactions in temporal goods than that every man who is to deal with his neighbour present to himself these commandments: "What Ye would that others should do unto You, do Ye also unto them," and "Love thy neighbour as thyself." If these were followed out, then everything would instruct and arrange itself; then no lawbooks nor courts nor judicial actions would be required; all things would quietly and simply be set to right, for every one's heart and conscience would guide him."1)

Tawney is not convinced by Luther's logic, he comments as follows:2)

> "Everything would arrange itself? ... Few would deny it. But how if does not? Is emotion really an adequate substitute for reason, and rhetoric for law? Is it possible to solve the problem which social duties present to the individual by informing him that no problem exists?

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1) Grosser Sermon vom Wucher, in Werke, Vol. VI, p.49. Quoted in R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. Penguin books.

2) Op. Cit. p.108.

> Is it true that the inner life is the sphere of religion, does it necessarily follow that the external order is simple irrelevant to it? To wave aside the world of institutions and law as alien to that of the spirit - is not this to abandon, instead of facing, the task of making Christian morality prevail, for which mediaeval writers, with their conception of a hierarchy of values related to a common end, had attempted, however inadequately, to discover a formula?

This weakness of Luther becomes apparent, when we ask about his attitude towards the institution of private property. It was mainly on three occasions that Luther had to accept the challenge; the property question became urgent in dealing with monasticism, in answering the demands of the revolutionary peasants, and in the exposition of the Seventh Commandment.

The monks had established a limited "Communism of Love", they had given up their private property for the good of the monastery. Luther does not deal with the property question in particular, he only claims that the monks do not understand the justifica-

tion by faith, but try to obtain it by works, e.g. voluntary poverty. Once they have recognized their mistake, monasticism will dissolve by itself; this actually did happen in all Protestant countries.

Far more important were the demands of the peasants, who were suffering particularly in Southern Germany from an impoverished nobility. They were practically slaves on the large estates, and in Luther's time they were losing their last rights through the introduction of the Roman law, which was replacing the teutonic custom-law.

The peasants asked Luther's opinion about their political program, the so-called "Twelve Articles." They were determined to establish an ideal Christian brotherhood in place of an intolerable social order. In some of these articles the problem of property is raised.

"The small tithe of a head of cattle they will on no account pay to any lord, spiritual or temporal, since God had created the beast for the

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

free use of man."

"They are entitled according to the word of God, to their share of game and fish, for God has given a right to all men to the fowls of the air and the fish in the water. Anyone who cannot prove the purchase of "a water" must restore it to the community, and the excessive preservation of game by the lord must cease, similarly in regard to the woods."

"The peasants are against the usurpation of the common land, which the peasants will take back in all cases where they have not been honestly purchased."3)

McKinnon mentions that these demands were very moderate and written in a persuasive form. Luther gave his opinion in a pamphlet called "An exhortation for the peasants"; he considers their demands justified, and asks the territorial princes to enforce them.

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3) James McKinnon, Luther and the Reformation, Vol. III, p.191.

"Dear Sirs, it is not the peasants which stand against you, but God himself to punish your madness."4)

However, he disagrees with the revolutionary methods of the peasants, "Suffering, suffering, cross, cross - this is a Christian's right and no other."5)

Luther advises that concessions be made on both sides, but it is obvious that he considers serfdom as compatible with spiritual freedom.

This attitude is too much for McKinnon, who protests in these words:

> "Yet calmly to assert that it is immaterial in a Christian society whether the Christian is a serf or a free man, whether the laws and institutions under which he lives are good or bad, whether he and his family are ground in the dust in order that a privileged class which professes to be Christian may life in selfish ease or luxury, showed a lack of understanding of human nature and what is permissable in a Christian state."6)

After Luther had seen the devastation of the peasant revolution, even though they were at the

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5) Werke 18, p.300.

6) Op. Cit. p.203.

4) Werke 18, p. 299

time victorious, he took the hard path of not favouring them. He published a rather deplorable effusion: "Against the robber and murdering bands of the peasants;" here we find the famous sentence: "Nothing is more develish than a rebellious man."

Though the Reformer was right, in condemning the revolutionary methods, which made the peasant's lot worse, which brought them into severe serfdom, lasting until the middle of the nineteenth century, yet their social demands were justified. The property question alienated the peasantry and later the proletariat from the Lutheran Church.

In his exposition of the Seventh Commandment "Though shalt not steal," Luther puts his whole emphasis on the protection of property. He becomes very eloquent, when he describes the various forms of stealing. Whether he observes the laziness of servants, the overcharging of tradesmen, their bad merchandise, their false measures, the driving of a hard

bargain with the needy, his conclusion always is: "The world is nothing else than a vast wide stall, full of great thieves."

The Commandment establishes the right of ownership, lawful governments may declare private property as a civil ordinance. Here Luther approaches the position of Hobbes, for whom the State is a fountainhead of all rights. This makes it seem as though the State could establish communism, but the "Formula of Concord" among the articles that cannot be tolerated in domestic life states: "That a Christian cannot with a good conscience hold or possess property, but is in duty bound to devote it to the common treasury."

As on other occasions, when a problem becomes too intricate, Luther points out that its solution really does not matter. Thus when discussing property he likes to add "temporal", making it clear that the true property of the Christian should

be found somewhere else. The Augsburg Confession closes this discussion by stating: "It is right for Christians to hold property."

While the German Reformers wanted to return to the simple life, which as they supposed had existed before the era of commercialism, Calvin accepted the economic civilization of his day. Calvinism was a strongly urban movement and the accumulation of riches in itself was not considered to be bad. But this did not mean that Calvin overlooked their inherent dangers. Therefore Calvin published and tried to enforce many regulations which concerned themselves with the mode of living, regulations which for us would seem to be unbearable.

The first Swiss Reformer, Zwingli, repeated the medieval thesis, that private property originated through ~~by~~ sin. Calvin agrees with him, but shifts the emphasis back to the Old Testament idea, that property is a Divine blessing.

> "Though some seem to enriche themselves by vigilance, nevertheless it is God who blesses and cares for them. Though others are rich before

[illegible]

[illegible]

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> they are born, and their fathers have acquired great possessions, nevertheless this is not by accident, but the providence of God rules over it." (Opera XXVI, 627. Ser. on Deut. 8:14-20)

Naturally the problem arises: "How do bad people get riches?" Calvin answers that God sometimes gives riches to bad people, but only to bring them to greater condemnation. They have received greater grace, but they did not profit by it. Thus wealth becomes a doubtful blessing, poor and rich are endangered, but the poor are safer. Professor Harkness has found passages in Calvin's sermons, where he compares the poor with a small boat on a streamlet which may strike a tree along the bank, but it is safer than a ship on a tempestuous sea. The rich are like those who skate on ice and are apt to fall, or like those who walk amongst thorns and must walk carefully lest they be pricked. She remarks that later, Calvin's followers used such metaphors to justify keeping the poor in poverty as a moral service.7)

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7) G. Harkness, John Calvin, New York, 1931, Henry Holt and Co., p.241.

We are not surprised, that Calvin stood for the right of every man to possess his own. The collective property of monasticism did not interest him especially; he was opposed to the monastic vows for the same reason as Luther. The time of the peasant revolts had passed, but Calvin observed communistic tendencies among the Anabaptists and the Libertines of his beloved city of Geneva.

> "We have already seen how these wretches profane marriage, mixing men with women like brute beasts, as their lust leads them. And how under the name of spiritual marriage they colour up this bestial pollution ......
> But finally, to leave no order among men, they also make a similar confusion as to goods: saying that it is the communion of saints for no one to possess anything of his own but for each to take whatever he can. At the beginning there were some silly Anabaptists who talked this way. But now that such absurdity has been rejected by all as repugnant to human sense, so that even the original authors are ashamed of it, these Libertines have taken refuge in it ... It is true that on the surface they have some justification, complaining of the avarice of those who call themselves Christian."

> "Let us recognize it as a just punishment of God that these fanatics come to overthrow all order, wishing to abolish all distinctions of goods, making the world like a forest of brigands where

> without account or payment everybody takes as his own whatever he can get. However, there are so many witnesses in scripture to rebuke this villainous confusion, that if we were to recite them all there would be no end."8)

This rather lengthy quotation shows Calvin as a vigorous defender of the rights of private property. Max Weber has claimed in his famous treatise "The protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism" (Translated London, 1930) that the Swiss Reformer has made an outstanding contribution to capitalism. Weber's ideas were popularized and criticised at the same time by R. H. Tawney. He makes this remark:

> "If capitalism means the direction of industry by the owners of capital for their own pecuniary gain, and the social relations which establish themselves between them and the wage-earning proletariat which they control, then capitalism has existed on a grand scale both in mediaeval Italy and in mediaeval Flanders. If by the capitalist spirit is meant the temper which is prepared to sacrifice all moral scruples to the pursuit of profit, it had been only too familiar to the saints and sages of the Middle Ages. It was the economic imperialism of Catholic Portugal and Spain, not the less imposing, if more solid, achievements of the Protestant powers,

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8) Opera VII, 214. Contre la secte des Libertins.

> which impressed contemporaries down to the Armada. It was predominantly Catholic Cities which were the commercial capitals of Europe, and Catholic bankers who were its leading financiers." (Op. cit. p.93)

Though these observations were undoubtedly correct, Weber's intention was to describe the particular contribution of Calvinism. His starting point was the observation that in a mixed population Protestants have more property than Catholics. His explanation is that the social teachings of Calvinism have combined an intense piety and a shrewd business acumen. The acquisition of money is not a means any longer, for the satisfaction of man's material needs. In Calvinism it has become a means to prove for the individual that he is predestined for eternal salvation. What in the Middle Ages was considered as the lowest form of avarice, has now become the duty of man's calling.

While asceticism during the Middle Ages brought man into a cloister, now under Calvinism it drives him into economic activity.

This thesis of Max Weber's has been discussed for nearly forty years, and the general agreement seems to be, that he was both wrong and right. He was wrong, that he found the stream of capitalism flowing only from the middle class virtues of industry, thrift~~y~~, sobriety and frugality generated by John Calvin. He overlooked that these virtues were indoctrinated long ago by the Stoa and the mediaeval schoolmen. He did not take into account how Machiavellis' exaltation of egoism profited capitalism. He connected the religiously good works of Calvinism too soon with the good work of capitalism. It is doubtful whether he ever studied Calvin in much detail, and whether he saw the ~~riches~~ diversity of Calvinism as it developed in Western Europe and in the New World. He starts his famous essay with a quotation from Benjamin Franklin, who can scarcely be called a good Calvinist.

Yet in many respects Weber was right, Calvinism with its hatred of poverty and idleness impressed

a strong sense of obligation on its adherents to make money and to acquire property. This was not considered any longer as greed, and therefore sinful. Once possessions are acquired they are not enjoyed in easy living, but are accumulated, handed from one generation to the other,and play an important part in the process of saving.

In one respect Calvin was a trailbreaker; he changed the Christian attitude with respect to money property. He broke down the many prohibitions regarding the taking of interest; he was thus instrumental in aiding the modern system of money and banking. While until then money-lenders and bankers always lived with an uneasy feeling, Calvin made honourable people out of them. This had tremendous consequences, as property today is not so much a thing any longer, but a claim; it is investment and not real estate.

Luther had repeated the doctrine of Aristotle that money cannot give birth to money, and had forbidden the taking of interest.9)

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9) Compare "Treaties on usury 1520" and "On trading and usury 1524", Philadelphia edition, Vol. 4.

If a man does not partake of the risk involved in any economic transaction, he should not partake of any profit. Luther grants two exceptions, the tithe of land, where the creditor is completely dependent upon the crop, and the buying of an annuity as a protection against poverty; the latter should not give more than 5 or 6 percent.

Calvin's position was published in a letter which he wrote to his friend Sachinos in 1545. This document is of such great importance, that we shall quote it almost in full.

> "While I have had no experience myself, I have learned from the example of others, how dangerous it is to give an answer to the question on which you ask my advice. For if we wholly condemn usury, we impose tighter fetters on the conscience than God himself. Yet if we permit it in the least, many under this pretext will take an unbridled liberty which can then be held in bounds by no restriction. If I were writing to you alone, I should have no fear, for I know well your prudence and restraint: but since you are asking for another, I fear that he may gather a little more permission from my words than I wish. However, since I Have no doubt, that you will act with discretion according to the nature of the man and the circumstances, I will tell you how the matter seems to me.
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> In the first place, by no testimony of the Scriptures is usury wholly condemned. For the

meaning of the saying of Christ, commonly thought to be very clear, i.e. "Lend, hoping for nothing again" (Luke 6:35) has been perverted. As elsewhere in speaking of the sumptuous feasts and ambitious social rivalry of the rich, he commands rather that they invite in the blind, the lame and the poor from the streets, who cannot make a like return, so here, wishing to curb abuses in lending, he directs us to loan chiefly to those from whom there is no hope of receiving anything....The words of Christ mean that he commends serving the poor rather than the rich. Thus we find not all usury forbidden.

The Law of Moses (Deut. 23:19) was political, and should not influence us beyond what justice and philantrophy will bear. It could be wished that all usury, and even the name, were banished from the earth. But since it is possible, it is necessary to concede to the common good.

We have passages in the Prophets and Psalms in which the Holy Spirit inveighs against usury. Thus a city is described as wicked because usury is found in its market-place and streets (Ps. 55:11). But as the Hebrew word here means fraud in general, the passage can be otherwise interpreted. Even if we grant that the prophet speaks explicitly of usury, it is not surprising that among the great evils of this time he should mention it, for with an improper use of usury, cruelty and many evil deceptions are often joined.....

It is said in praise of a holy and God-fearing man, that "He putteth not out his money to usury." Indeed, it is a very rare thing for a man to be honest and at the same time a usurer. The prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 22:12) goes even further, for in

> enumerating the crimes which inflamed the wrath of the Lord against the Jews, he uses two Hebrew words, Nesec and Tarbit: one of which means usury and is derived from a root meaning to consume, while the second signifies an increase or addition, doubtless because each man contriving to further his own gain takes or rather extorts it at his neighbors loss ...
>
> Not it is said that today, too, usury should be forbidden on the same grounds as among the Jews, since there is a bond of brotherhood among us. To this I reply, that in the civil state there is some difference; for the situation in which the Lord had placed the Jews, and many other circumstances, make it easy for them to engage in business among themselves without usury. Our relationship is not at all the same. Therefore I do not consider that usury is wholly forbidden among us, except it be repugnant to justice and charity.

In this letter Calvin recognizes that a change in an economic situation justifies a change in policy. This is most significant, because it leads Calvin not to interpret the biblical prohibitions literally as he usually does, but in terms of "justice and charity."

In the next part of his letter he attacks the idea of Aristotle and of the Church-fathers that money is barren, "Money cannot beget money," and therefore interest must not be taken.

> "The reasoning of Saint Ambrose and of Chrystostom that money does not beget money, is in my judgment too superficial. What does the sea beget? What does the land? I receive income from the rental of a house. Is it because the money grows there? The earth produces things from which money is made, and the use of a house can be bought for money. And is not money more fruitful in trade than in any other form of possession one can mention? Is it lawful to let a farm, requiring a payment in return, and unlawful to receive any profit from the use of money? ....
>
> How do merchants derive their profit? By their industry you will say. Certainly if money is shut up in a strongbox, it will be barren - a child can see that. But whoever asks a loan of me does not intend to keep this money idle and gain nothing. The profit is not in the money itself, but in the return that comes from its use. It is necessary then to draw the conclusion, that while such subtle distinctions appear on the surface to have some weight, they vanish on closer scrutiny, for they have no substance. I THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT USURY MUST BE JUDGED, NOT BY ANY PARTICULAR PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE, BUT SIMPLY BY THE RULES OF EQUITY.

True, Calvin makes a number of exceptions, because he fears his letter could be used and the new freedom to take interest turned to evil purposes:

> Interest must not be taken from the poor. One must not be so bent on gain as to neglect the necessary offices, scorning his poor brethern. One must not go beyond the bounds of equity. These are to be ascertained by the Golden Rule. He who borrows must make as much or more gain

> from the money borrowed. (Apparently to prevent the possibility that the money borrowed might actually be "barren".) We must not judge what is equitable according to "vulgar custom" or the iniquity of the world, but take the rule from the word of God.
>
> We must regard the transaction, not as a private affair, but for the good of the public. One must not go beyond what the laws of the regions permit. This is not always a sufficient rule, for they often permit what they cannot restrain. It is better to ask too little than too much.10)

In spite of these restrictions, Tawney regards Calvin's treatment of capital as a watershed.11) Not that the reformer was highly original in treating the problem of interest, nor that he introduced new customs, but that he gave a good conscience to owners of money property. From that time on, none of the churches tried to set up elaborate regulations against usury. The commercial revolution and later the industrial revolution gave many chances for profit, and from then on, this profit could be

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10)G. Harkness, Op. Cit. page 207.

11)Religion and the rise of Capitalism, p.107.

re-invested and a constant growth of more money property became possible. This leads us to the problems of our day.

7. The contemporary problem of private property.

The contemporary economic system, which is mainly based on the institution of private property, has frequently been analyzed. It has been vehemently attacked by Karl Marx and his school, who consider it as a refined system of exploitation. It has been passionately defended by presidents of the Chambers of Commerce, e.g. Eric Johnston (U.S.A.), or by economists such as Hayek (The Road to Serfdom).

The Churches too have added their analysis, the Roman Catholic Encyclica (Quadragesimo Anno), as found in K. Reinhardt[12)] gives this description:

> "It is patent, that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few, and that those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees

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[12)] A Realistic Philosophy (Milwaukee, Bruce Company, 1949)

> and directors of invested funds, administering them at their will ... They hold and control money, are able to govern credit and to determine its allotment and thus supply so to speak the lifeblood of the entire economic body, grasping as it were in their hands the very soul of production, so that no one dare breathe against their will .... This accumulation of power is a natural result of limitless free competition, which permits the survival of those who are strongest, which often means those who are most ruthless and pay least heed to the dictates of conscience."

The last paragraph of this description is only half true, monopoly means not always the survival of the fittest, but is frequently a deliberate agreement between competitors to limit production and therewith to raise prices. Otherwise the analogy seems to be fair enough. Another Christian view was given in a resolution at the Malvern conference of the Church of England, 1940:

> "There are certain features of our social life which act as stumbling blocks making it harder for men to live Christian lives. Among these we believe that the maintenance of that part of the structure of society, by which the ultimate ownership of the principal industrial resources of the community can be vested in the hands of private owners, may be such a stumbling block."13)

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13) As found in F.A.Iremenger, William Temple, London, Oxford Press, 1949, p.431.

Archbishop Temple was the author of this resolution, of which the last part had been "is such a stumbling block." To his great disappointment this was replaced by the words "may be such a stumbling block." This took the force out of the resolution.

The same thing happened at the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Section III, which dealt with the topic: "The Church and the disorder of society" stressed the points of conflict between Christianity and athe~~n~~istic communism as follows:

1. the commuhist promise of what amounts to a complete redemption of man in history;

2. the belief that a particular class by virtue of its role as the bearer of a new order is free from the sins and ambiguities that Christians believe to be characteristic of all human existence;

3. The materialistic and deterministic teachings, however they may be qualitied, that are incompatible with belief in God and with the Christian view of man as a person, made in God's way, and responsible to Him;

4. the ruthless methods of communists in dealing with their opponents;

5. the demand of the party on its members for an exclusive and unqualified loyalty which belongs only to God, and the coercive policies of communist dictatorship in controlling every aspect of life.[14]

Against the dissenting vote of the Czech protestant delegate this description was accepted. But as capitalism was analysed, John Foster Dulles moved an amendment to place the words "laissez-faire" in front of capitalism, which made the issue an historical one, as laissez-faire capitalism does nowhere exist today.

The Churches assembled found the following points of conflict with capitalism:

1. It tends to subordinate what should be the primary task of any economy - the meeting of human needs,- to the economic advantage of those who have most power over its institutions.

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[14] Opus cited, page 194.

2. It tends to produce serious inequalities.

3. It has developed a practical form of materialism in Western nations in spite of their Christian background, for it has placed the greatest stress upon success in making money.

4. It has also kept the people of capitalist countries subject to a kind of fate which has taken the form of such social catastrophes as mass unemployment.[15)]

For our purposes it is important that we inquire how law students and economists describe our system today. We find a team of them in Berle and Means.[16)] In the preface to their book (p.VIII) they describe the corporate revolution. During the last fifty years, perhaps two thirds of the industrial wealth of the country has been transferred from individual ownership to ownership by the publicly financed corporation. The divorce of ownership from

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[15)] Opus cited, 1950.

[16)] The Modern Corporation and Private Property, New York, The MacMillan Company, 1939.

control almost necessarily involves a new form of economic organization of society.

These varied descriptions show roughly the contemporary problem of private property, namely that capitalism has become a pseudo-religion, that economic reforms to avoid exploitation of the masses are demanded from many quarters, and connected with this is the cry for social reform, to arrive at a better balance of political power.

As private property has become one of the main features of capitalism, we use the latter expression whenever we talk about the contemporary economic system. The word capitalism is charged with emotions, and stands for a way of life as the word orthodoxy did in the sixteenth century. The contemporary word for heresy seems to be communism. Capitalism is a system of life for which many people seem to see a quasi divine origin.

Like every good theological system it has different parts, which fit nicely together. In its anthropology man is pictured as an acquisitive animal,

the possession of property is a tangible symbol of self-realization.

Competition is not any longer on the physical plane, as among animals, but on the economic level. Man's individualism, a wolf among wolves, is accented against his sociality. The "self-made" man receives, high praise, though few people realize that no man has made himself, nor is the sole power behind his progress.

The real worth of a man is usually estimated in terms of possessions. The mediaeval idea of vocation is often replaced by the cash value theory of work.

The cosmology of capitalism expresses a belief in the primacy of economic law, as the fundamental principle which interprets the universe. This basic principle is usually called: The law of supply and demand. It is claimed that the welfare of man depends in the last analysis upon uninhibited economic enterprise.

The ethics of capitalism may be described as "enlightened self interest," implying that all human relations can be expressed in economic terms.

Labour is not any longer a personal or social problem, but exclusively an economic one. The crown of it all is its mythology, or as it is called today, "the American way." In this way of life property is the sacrament - "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" which this religion purports to convey. The ownership of property is the earnest of the good life. Each succesful acquisition is in its specific way a symbol of divine favour, estimated by a scale of values.

The rating of the sacramental aspect of property depends in the last analysis upon the proportion of the amount gained to the output required. Hence, dividends and rents have greater sacramental meaning than wages, while achievements through speculation have a fascinating, yet dangerous character of the holiest of the holy. The accumulation of property is the piling up of merit, and the statement of Daddy Warbucks in the comic strip "Little Orphan Annie," "This country needs more million-dollar-a-year-men", is a description of the sanctified man.16)

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16) Charles Duell Kean, The Significance of Capitalism in Christianity and Property. Edited by Joseph F. Fletcher, Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 1947, p. 166.

Not all property is considered to be on the same scale of relative values. At the top is property in the form of all kinds of securities, mortgages, stocks and bonds. This kind of property is regarded very highly, because theoretically it grows by watching the market.

Next in the scale of values is wealth producing property in a material form, such as factories and industrial real estate, used for money making purposes.

The third important category of property includes real estate and residential buildings occupied by the owner, automobiles, insurance policies, etc., going down to the ownership of clothing and other personal essentials. This kind of property is used to satisfy the personal needs, but not to gain further wealth.

The ownership of property has become a means by which men can be classified in a social hierarchy. The acquisition of property has become the accepted

standard in western culture, by which the success or failure of anybody can be measured. In comparison with property, lineage or education have become quite secondary.

The final purpose of property is to give its owner a feeling of security. The cry for more social security shows that too many people have too little property and thus feel insecure. Therefore reforms of property must be seriously considered. Existing forms of ownership are not inviolable and unalterable. Social obligations are stressed far more than the privileges which are tied up with private property.

There is a general feeling that the restriction of production by monopolies is an abuse of rights, whether these rights are of a purely technical nature (patents) or whether the monopoly is simply an accumulation of wealth, makes no difference. The same attitude is being taken concerning land monopoly, which in former years strangled growing settlements and is today broken up by tax devices.

It is generally recognized that the owners of the means of production must make economic goods available. In times of depression the capital owners who, during the "boom" did not like state interference, are frequently approaching the government for help. At that time it is their duty, to know for themselves when "to prime the pump."

Archbishop Tample wrote (1947): "The heart of it all is a full recognition of private property, combined with an insistence, that it must always carry responsibility. The property without the function is a thing which is condemned. Now this condemns a very large amount of the property that exists today: to some extent in land, to an enormous extent in stocks and shares."[17)]

Legal institutions must be used to assure that the owners of property fulfill their social obligations. The workers must be protected against the dangers of their occupations, against sickness, and always against the threatening unemployment.

[17)] Op. Cit. p. 432.

The owners of property are forced today to obey many regulations and to contribute towards the well-being of those who have little or no property and therefore must work for them.

Another powerful public weapon is the use of taxation. Taxes today are not solely used to bring in revenue but they also try to accomplish social goals. They aim at a better distribution of income and property. Progressive personal income taxes are taken for granted, estate and inheritance taxes could be used to a far greater degree to change our pattern of property.

The nineteenth century became conscious of the exploitation of the proletarian by the owners of the means of production. The twentieth century has recognized another danger, the reckless exploitation of the soil. It has been estimated that the land in the Canadian West has only one fourth of the fertility it had fifty years ago.18) This "soil mining"

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18) Dr. C. F. Bentley, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Alberta.

has taken such forms that, if it is not stopped in time, it might lead to a national disaster. Some system of licensing every farmer and the legal right to supervise him, thus limiting his property rights, will soon have to be worked out. We might consult the British experience, since the Labour government introduced licensing and supervision of every farmer. This has led to only very few convictions, but given the legal means to influence agricultural production without changing the laws of property.

In the realm of industry a change of the relationship between labour and capital has been proposed. Instead of having private ownership of the means of production in basic industries, collective ownership has been tried. Yet there seems to be an immense ideological barrier from both sides. People are still not working for themselves, but they are working for the government.

Christian thinkers have advocated a system of co-ownership in industry, e.g. Messner19). This

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19)Op. Cit. p. 798-800.

implies more than co-partnership; in the latter system the workers are represented at the board of directors without having any financial interests in the firm. This system of co-ownership leads to a better distribution of property, it forms a link between labour and property, it increases the interest of the workers and therewith their productivity. This co-ownership might take the form of acquiring or giving shares to the workers. Many problems are connected with this. If the worker wants to partake of the profit he must be willing to share the occasional unavoidable loss. If he is co-owner of the plant in which he works, probably his freedom of movement has been curtailed. This co-ownership is no panacea and many experiments will be necessary before its value is established. One experiment was started this January in the coal industry in the Rhineland (Germany) where the workers are now co-owners and therewith co-managers. The same proposals have frequently been made by Walter

Reuther, president of the United Autoworkers of America.

This brings us to the problem of the modern corporation. It has been demanded that those who control the corporations should be made responsible, not only towards the shareholders, but towards the community. Until recently only two possibilities were taken seriously, either that the trusteeship should be established for the so-called passive property, or that free hand should be given to the controlling group.

"The rise of the modern corporation has brought a concentration, which can compete on equal terms with the modern state, economic power versus political power, each strong in its own field. The State seeks in some aspects to regulate the corporation, while the corporation, steadily becoming more powerful, makes every effort to avoid such regulations. Where its own interests are concerned, it even attempts to dominate the state. The future may

see the economic organism now typified by the corporation, not only on an equal plane with the state, but possibly even superseding it as a dominant form of social organization."20)

As a remedy the same author proposes in a somewhat vague way: "It seems essential that the control of the great corporations should develop into a purely neutral technocracy, balancing a variety of claims by various groups in the community and assigning to each a portion of the incomestream on the basis of public policy rather than private cupidity."21)

This suggestion follows the line laid down by Henry Damford Parker22) who sees the property problem not as private property versus public property. "There are two key features of the capitalist system where changes of a radical nature will be

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20) Berle, Op. cit. p. 357.

21) Op. Cit. p. 356.

22) Marxism. An Autopsy. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. What is to be done? pp. 228-239. 1939.

found to be imperative. The first is the unearned income which accrues to the property-owning classes, and the second is the status of the wage-earner in industry. The two main items in any progressive program should be to reduce the share of the national income which goes to the rentier class, and to give the worker in large-scale industry the status of a property-owner."

Christian ethical thinkers have generally agreed with this position. Private property gives not only a chance to exploit the weaker individual, but is an important means to gain political power. This power may be organized in the form of a class which works together and excludes outsiders or in the form of giant corporations which try to control the political parties. To arrive at a better distribution of power, it is important that everybody should possess essential property. Emil Brunner defined this rather narrowly as natural property - "that which is

immediately associated with our person."23) The usual description of essential property is wider and might be defined as a minimum standard of living. This is not vague any longer, because medical and social workers can assess fairly precisely what a person needs to remain on the human level. This has little to do with the expectations of the individual, which vary with the cultural level.

For many people their job is practically the only property they have, as the cash-value of their personal (essential) property is unimportant. Therefore his job becomes all-important. Parker24) proposes: "if a job in corporate industry constituted a property right, so that the worker could not be deprived of it (except for legally proved misconduct) without his own consent, industrial managers would normally find it profitable to keep

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23) Justice and the Social Order, New York, 1945, Harper and Brothers, p. 149.

24) Opus cited, p.233.

their workers fully occupied and would, therefore, expand production; and in order to sell their products, they would be compelled to lower their prices." This idea, that a job constitutes a property-right, has revolutionary implications. What it implies is that each industry should be "the property, not of the state, but of the individuals who work in it; and that the relationship between different industries should be regulated, not by centralized planning and control, but by the mechanism of the free market." This scheme is both anti-capitalist and anti-communist.

The greatest possible portion of society should enjoy income from property. This is of considerable importance, because the income from property, in contrast with the income from work, leads to the first accumulation of wealth. The development of middle-sized possessions, which would not give much political power, should be the rule. Large possessions or extensive poverty should not be caused by the social

system itself. The goal of social reform is not the abolition of private property, but the creation of private property for the greatest portion of the members of the community. The great weapon will be the modern methods of fiscal policy.

Yet there will always be differences in private property, because of different ability and energy, especially if a severe estate-tax would level off the property, which people might receive from their relatives.

An unequal human effort should receive a different monetary reward, which will partly be saved and will thus lead to the formation of private property. Theoretically this is not supposed to happen in the U.S.S.R., yet we quote from a Soviet newspaper: "....according to the Moscow paper Trud (20/1/1936) sixty employees of a Donetz mine earned monthly wages of 1000-2500 roubles per head; four hundred earned 500-800 roubles per head and the remaining thousand averaged 125 roubles. The top wages in this average

mine were about thirty times higher than the minimum wages. But the director of a mine of 1500 employees belongs only to the medium stratum of the technocracy; the salaries of directors, chief engineers and administrators in the top stratum are up to 100 times higher than the average wage and up to 300 times higher than the minimum wage. In 1943 the appearance of the first proletarian millionaries, enthusiastically welcomed by the Soviet press, completed the development."[25]

These new millionaires can invest their excess income in government bonds, yielding between 7 and 8 percent; the deposits in the saving banks are free from income tax and succession duties. Economic equality has been abandoned, dictator Stalin made this explicit in a speech (1934): "....equality in the sphere of requirements and personal life is a piece of reactionary petty-bourgeous stupidity worthy of a primitive sect of ascetics, but not of a socialist society organized on Marxian lines, because we

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[25] As found in John H. Hallowell, Main Currents in Modern Political Thought, page 502.

cannot demand that all people should have the same requirements and tastes, and that all people shall live their individual lives in the same way .... By equality Marxism means, not equality in personal requirements and personal life, but the abolition of classes, i.e. (a) the equal emancipation of all toilers from exploitation after the capitalists have been overthrown and expropriated; (b) the equal abolition of all private property in the means of production after they have been transformed into the property of the whole of society; (c) the equal duty of all to work according to their ability and the equal right of all toilers to receive according to the amount of work they have done (Socialist society); (d) the equal duty of all to work according to their ability and the equal right of all toilers to receive according to their requirements (Communist society). And Marxism starts out with the assumption that peoples' tastes and requirements are not, and cannot be equal

in quality or in quantity, either in the period of socialism or in the period of communism .... It is time it was understood that marxism was opposed to leveling."26)

Stalin, as far as points (c) and (d) go, is here in company with Christian theologians, like Emil Brunner, who opposes equality of income, because it creates a mechanistic society. He favours inequality of income which supposedly gives us an organic society. Unfortunately, he does not explain how far this inequality may go, until it becomes harmful for society; neither does Stalin.

Christian thinkers seem to agree, that an experimental approach seeking new forms of property seems to be warranted. Theoretically the problem can be easily described; an older collection of essays, "Property, its duties and rights"27) makes this terse comment:

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26) A handbook of Marxism, London, 1935, p.937-938, ed. by Emil Burns.

27) London McMillan 1913.

"It is this intellectual passage from the conception of private property as secondary and contingent to the conception of it as ultimate and absolute, which has caused all the trouble. And this passage was made, almost insensibly, through the intense realization of the value to be set upon the liberty of the individual to live his own life." (p.181)

But the practical solution is more difficult. Both Jews and Christians have experience with social ownerships, e.g. the tribe, the clan, the monastery. This ancient experience of the common-wealth (the primitive Christians called it koinonia) could become effectual again today. This will bring us into a strange dilemna which Joseph J. Fletcher expresses in these words:

> "It will be said, perhaps more often than anything else, that in the Christian view man is a sinner as well as a social being, and that social ownership of the social means of production will lead to corruption and power lust in the public offices. This is no doubt true. These evils exist already in private enterprise and in police (as distinct from participating) Government control. We may be sure in a "fallen world", that new modes of property ownership will create new problems of justice and adjustment. Therefore, for

> Christians, the question is: which kind of problems should we be trying to solve, the kind that arise because we do not practice our principles, or the kind that arise because we do?"

The social dilemna is obvious; if the social aspect of ownership is denied or minimized the consequence will be individualism with all its dangers; if, on the other hand, the individual character of ownership is rejected, we get some form of collectivism.

Both, individualism in itself and collectivism in itself, are unable to give a balanced system of property. The problem is no longer private property or public property. Today it must be determined how much property shall remain in private hands and how much shall be controlled or owned by public authorities. Co-partnership and co-ownership are possible and the job should become a right and not something insecure

and accidental. The decisions will be made not along ideological lines of inalienable rights but along pragmatical lines, whether they serve the common good. Just because Christianity cannot be identified with any specific economic program, it gives freedom for decision.

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